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# ELISABETH OF ROUMANIA

## A Study

WITH TWO TALES FROM THE GERMAN OF CARMEN  
SYLVA—HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELISABETH

BY

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"OTHELLO," "THE COPPER QUEEN," "HAZEL FANE,"  
ETC., ETC., ETC.

"Not marble, nor the gilded monuments  
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme ;  
But you shall shine more bright in these contents  
Than unswept stone, besmeared by sloven time.  
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,  
And broils root out the work of masonry,  
Nor Mars' sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn  
The living record of your memory.  
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity  
Shall you pace forth ; your praise shall still find room  
Even in the eyes of all posterity  
That wear this world out to the ending doom.  
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,  
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes."

SONNET LV.—*Shakespeare.*



LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL

LIMITED

1891

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TO

## CARMEN SYLVA.

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MADAM,

When I began this study the fame of Carmen Sylva—a second sun already risen behind the green Carpathians—was glimmering a bright beacon in the blue Orient. It is not strange that worshippers of nature—light, beauty, and genius—should be attracted by rays thrown so broadcast, and when my revered friend, the famous poet of the Danube, his Excellency the late Vasilie Alecsandri, spoke to me of Carmen Sylva, his words fell on a soil already fertilised by more than common affection. When your Majesty graciously permitted me to make some translations from the works of Carmen Sylva I felt a pardonable pride, and began the following work, which, I may say, although a labour of love, still falls all too far short of what I could have wished it to be. I have continued it, not alone as a token of that homage the world owes to genius, patience, and culture, but as a personal tribute—adding my heartfelt thanks for Carmen Sylva's too generous praise of my own poor pen. It is a further testimony to personal appreciation, that of an amazed and faithful witness of such powers of brain, mind, and intellectual technique as few improvisatrici of the past could ever have possessed, and certainly such as not one of our day could aspire to possess. I feared I had

written words of exaggerated laudation. I find them but commonplace mediums of what should be exalted praise. To those who have had neither the honour of listening to Carmen Sylva's fervid eloquence, nor the pleasure of comprehending in their primeval strength her impassioned thoughts, to such, perhaps, my words might seem addressed —what can I say?—rather to a queen than to a poet. That would, indeed, be a great pity; but others—and they are legion—will readily understand that whilst I paint a cloudless sky, only those born to look at the sun may look at the sun, and those who tire of endless blue and unceasing splendour have but to retire to the shade of mediocrity, commonplace, and idleness. They are many—and the world is wide.

The example of your unflinching endeavour appeals to all, and shall never be lost upon at least one of your most sincere admirers—myself. May I beg you, Madam, to overlook those faults, even in my best work, which your fine mind cannot but recognise at a glance, and to judge me rather by that heart the goodness of which is only surpassed by the genius of its possessor. I have the honour to subscribe myself your Majesty's affectionate and devoted servant, and to respectfully kiss the hand which signs the world-renowned name—Carmen Sylva.

BLANCHE ROOSEVELT.



## PREFACE.

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A GOOD wine may need no bush, but that is not equivalent to saying that a good book needs no preface. For everything is relative, from grapes to literature, and whatever the venture, the vendor has the right to label his merchandise—to ticket it, as it were, with that professional hall-mark necessary to the article, typical of the epoch, and the usual outcome of enterprise, necessity, and civilisation.

Most authors write prefaces to explain or point out what is in their book. I write mine to explain and point out what is not in my book; and as the overture to an opera is generally written after the dress rehearsal of that same opera, so, after a dress rehearsal of my *magnum opus*, I write my overture, and shall try to bring together a medley of tunes, the which, by catching the ear in a small way, may end by retaining it in a large way. To be brief—but it is

very difficult to be brief ; however, to try to be brief —I will say that I have had the courage to read my own book in proofsheets, and find that one of the principal things I wished to expatiate upon is the very one I have not even alluded to. To save delay and encourage skipping, I name the chapter, even the page :—Chapter V. of Memoir, page 44 ; and anyone may discover that where I have accredited the Royal poet with having accomplished much, I have done so in a subjective sort of manner, and objectively would have done quite as much for her, and even much more for myself.

Those who read of Queen Elisabeth's marvellous works, in a literary sense, may readily understand what she had to do with, and in what way her great works have been achieved. But the social reforms, the propagation of home industries, and the extension of national education, are more the work of an economist and a philanthropist, than of a poet, and it is to the Queen's fine enthusiasm, which amounts in many cases to genius—it is to this special quality that Roumania and Roumanians owe so much. Carmen Sylva and her Royal husband, each with a different method, have pulled together, and found the right

method, each to do the right thing in a different way, and to do many good things in many different ways.

The King is as silent as the Queen is effusive, and his dogged persistence is quite worth her restless perseverance. The King knows everything, is an inveterate reader, but one never hears him speak of his knowledge or his reading tastes—rarely does he commit himself to an utterance which could in any way establish his likes or dislikes ; and the Queen—the Queen is Carmen Sylva; what more need one say ?

Once, touching a volume of her poems which lay undusted on the table, she remarked laughingly :

“ You see, he is proud of me and my work ”—meaning the King—“ but look at that : I don’t believe he has ever even read one of my books ! ”

At the commencement of Prince Charles’s reign in Roumania, the state of society in Bucharest was one perhaps perfectly in accordance with that of a warm-hearted primitive race, displaying all the instincts of primeval spirit, and many of the acquirements of a too hasty civilisation ; but there was not quite that rigidity and etiquette which obtains with the German or Gothic people, nor that virtue which, on the banks of the Danube, might be mistaken for

virtue on the banks of the Rhine. They were two as distinctly different things as the two rivers above named, and the fact of what these royal couple were, what they had been, and what, in an ethical sense, they were accustomed to, may be summed up in the following instance :

On their arrival in Bucharest, the Queen desired to form her household, and naturally, of those national elements which presented themselves ; also to arrange for Drawing Rooms, receptions and various State functions expected by the people and necessary to any Royalty's State.

After much looking about, the most intuitive appreciation of humanity as she found it—after long and ardent counsels with Prince, ministry, and social personages, it was decided to admit to the Drawing Rooms, &c., every lady who had *not been divorced more than once* ; and the difficulties of the situation thus presented to this puritanical Princess, brought up in tenderest years as the word puritanical suggests, may readily be imagined.

There was, however, a humorous side to all this which the poet-Queen saw, and, as one not so comical, acutely felt. It was no uncommon thing to notice a

lady with her third husband, the two former divorced ones being in the same room, the last having been the first divorced to marry the second, the second put away for the third, the third set aside to take back the first. There was, too, a certain sense of bewilderment generated by the perfect harmony which reigned between these miraculously-made, miraculously-marred, and miraculously-mended couples, and a never-ending sense of insecurity in the way they were all to be addressed—a certain Palais Royal sort of connubial situation, and a very decided Bucharest Royal sort of dilemma. But tact is more than genius, or talent, or diplomacy. Tact lights up many dark corners. Tact's ready-made smiles frighten away many prepared frowns. Tact's ready sympathy steadies many who totter on the brink of disaffection and discontent. Tact mends broken families, restores household goods, and reintegrates household gods. It reconciles Church and State and municipality; it heals broken hearts, and broken heads, and broken pockets; arrests ambition, assuages the thirst of fame, and stays the foot of dishonour.

And when this tact is allied to physical, mental and moral beauty, cause is evident and effect certain.

When nature's passport to success comes in a lady's blue eyes, bright smiles and amiable moods; when her word is gold, her actions are noble, and her heart is gladsome—the world only asks to be assured, only listens to be convinced, only hopes to be contented.

But, bless me, all this is a preface!—and I only intended in the outset to say a word or two—said—said—and perhaps too often *said*. Hence I, to close, add my dear thanks to those who have helped, consciously or unconsciously, in the building up this edifice—Professor Max Müller, W. Beatty-Kingston, their Excellencies Prince and Princess Jon Ghica—to the memory of the great Alecsandri, and to all;—but remember that the great corner-stone is mine. To those dead I commend myself as a Christian; to those alive I recommend myself as an author; and, leaving the room of the latter, with Sir Peter, alas, also leave my character behind me.

BLANCHE ROOSEVELT.





Carmen Sylvia and  
Helen Vacaresco  
1890



# ELISABETH OF ROUMANIA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### PREFATORY MEMOIR.

MACAULAY has said that “industry and a taste for intellectual pleasures are peculiarly respectable in those who can afford to be idle and who have every temptation to be dissipated.”

Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth of Roumania, known in the world of letters as Carmen Sylva, may justly be numbered amongst those noble aspirants for literary fame alluded to by the brilliant historian and essayist.

The Queen of Roumania, connected by marriage with the reigning House of Hohenzollern, and born Princess Elisabeth of Wied, belongs to a race illustrious as far back as the eleventh century. The

princes of the House of Wied, distinguished not alone in religion, politics, science, and art, have been a race of men noted for their humanity, intelligence, noble sentiments, and lofty aims. In the *due cento* the heads of the House of Wied were counts, and in 1720 became Princes of Wied. They were nobles of vast possessions and supreme feudal power; their lands stretched far and wide to the right and left of the sweeping Rhine, and the towers of their family castle cast a shadow against the sky as distinct as the summits of the Eifel and the Westerwald heights.

The oldest known ancestral seat of the Counts of Wied was the Burg palace, Ober Alt Wied, later the palace Nieder Alt Wied. Amongst her Majesty's noble ancestors we count a long line of archbishops, statesmen, and civil dignitaries, of whom none were more remarkable than the Count Hermann zu Wied, Elector and Archbishop of Cologne from the year 1515 to 1547, who, from the outset one of the Reformation's most bitter foes, suddenly became an avowed partizan of the Evangelical Church. He entered into active correspondence with Luther and Melancthon, and at Easter, 1543, for the first time

administered the holy sacrament according to Lutheran and Evangelical rites. This conversion caused the greatest excitement in royal and papal circles. In vain did King and Pope seek to undermine the influence of the new creed. His Grace Count Hermann not only believed in the tenets of Lutheranism, but moved by, as he thought, Divine inspiration, clung resolutely to the dogmas of the new faith.

Impeached by the King, the Pope, his enemies and adversaries, he made a remarkable speech, in which his piety, eloquence, and intuition placed on record one of the famous intellectual souvenirs of the House of Wied. The history of one of the princes of Wied in any century would be interesting, but at an epoch celebrated for its liberty, enlightenment, and progress the noble descendant of this worthy race, Princess Elisabeth—Carmen Sylva—embodies not alone all the traditions of past virtue, but has added to this splendid heritage world-wide and enduring renown.

It might have been difficult to write of the Queen of Roumania solely as a queen, but her Majesty has invited criticism in that most exacting of all arts—literature. Had her Majesty not been Carmen Sylva,

we should probably never have written these lines, but the gifted pen has become the royal sceptre, and the kingdom of the poet a domain bounded neither by sweeping Danube nor majestic Carpathian ; a limitless expanse stretching to the frontiers of intellectual capacity ; a kingdom that links past with present in the ideal, universal realm of beauty, genius, and humanity. This is Carmen Sylva's realm, the gold of her sceptre, the purple of her raiment ; these are her quarterings of nobility, these the hereditary honours, succeeded to and inherited by the right divine of a noble, gifted, and truly poetic nature.

At the commencement of her biographical sketch of the Queen of Roumania, the Baroness Nathalie von Stakelberg, friend and historian of the royal poetess, has given the explanation of her Majesty's *nom de plume*, Carmen Sylva. In the German Carmen signifies das Lied, and Sylva, der Wald ; Carmen, the song, and Sylva, the glade.

Her Majesty, born Princess of Wied, is the daughter of Prince Hermann of Wied, a philosopher and thinker, and of the noble Maria, Princess of Nassau. The Queen was born at Neue Wied, 29th

December, 1843 ; her godmothers were Elisabeth, Queen of Prussia, and Elisabeth, Grand Duchess of Russia.

The Princess Elisabeth, even in her tenderest years, was characterised by those qualities which to-day are so prominent in the Queen and poet : sweetness, simplicity, and goodness. Her Highness was a very gifted child, but in spite of her supreme mental endowments, she always seemed unconscious that they placed her above the ordinary mortal. She was of a happy but thoughtful disposition ; she evinced the greatest respect for her teachers, and showed a wonderful reverence for talents which even in her tender years her fine instinct enabled her to appreciate.

When Princess Elisabeth was four years of age, Fräulein Lavater became her governess. This lady was a woman of exceptional qualities of mind and heart. Above all she was possessed of firmness, independence, and extraordinary patience. She soon discovered that in the tutorship of this strange child these qualities were pre-eminently necessary. Her little pupil, even at that early age, displayed traits of character simply astounding in one so young. She

was determined, inflexible, and uncommunicative. Moreover, she was as restless as quicksilver, and was absolutely incapable of keeping quiet. While she learned her lessons she marched up and down her schoolroom, declaiming them aloud, and when she recited them she was either pulling at her dress, moving about, or turning over her book in her hands.

Her parents were very desirous that her portrait should be taken, but the thing was almost an impossibility. At last it was decided that she and her brother, Prince William, should sit to Professor Sohn for their portraits. Every conceivable device was tried to keep the Princess quiet, but in vain. At length the painter threw down his brush in despair. Making a violent effort she determined to remain still. She succeeded, but the strain was so terrible that five minutes afterwards she fell fainting on the floor.

Princess Elisabeth's earliest sorrow was the birth of her brother Otto. Not only was she then excluded from her beloved mother's presence, but this cherished parent became paralysed, and lay stretched for months on a bed of pain. Moreover, little Otto was born

with an incurable malady. Elisabeth could not understand why the advent of the baby brother had saddened the entire household, and instead of joy, had brought sickness, sorrow, and suffering.

Little Elisabeth early learned the art of self-sacrifice. Her compassionate nature and rare unselfishness were often the household theme; her pity, however, was tempered by a strange sense of justice. Although of a most generous disposition she rarely gave her things away, and when she did, always went so far as to speculate, not on what she could, but on what she ought to do without. She finally decided in favour of giving, but never till she had subjected herself to the severest rigour of childish reasoning.

One day her mother gave her an entire piece of woollen stuff, saying that it was to be given to the poor. "No," said the little Princess, "I shall give them all my white dresses, and keep this myself." Her mother asked her if she thought the white dresses suitable for poor children to wear in all sorts of weather. The little girl reflected for some moments before replying, and then gravely said: "Perhaps you are right," and decided to whom she

would give the piece of material. She then set out, staff in hand, with her little brother, towards the cottage of a peasant, whose principal wealth was a large family of ill-clad children.

Shut up in the castle of Neue Wied, the little Princess, without any youthful companions except her two young brothers, Princes William and Otto, was strangely alone. She was, however, singularly free from morbid thoughts, and neither moped nor gave way to melancholy ; she spent her time with her books and birds and flowers, playing in the summer garden of her ancestral home, or climbing the hills of the Westerwald, which surrounded Castle Neue Wied in a chain of undulating heights ; in the distance was the legendary Rhine, and stretching far away against the horizon were the towers of Coblenz and the Roman ruins of Braunsberg and Segendorf.

The valley is pierced by the river Wied, which glides like a silver serpent through the forest ; to the west the extinct volcanoes of Maifeld and Eifel frown on the sombre woods ; while from the valley of the Mosel steals the rich aroma of scented heather and perfumed vineyards.



ELISABETH OF ROUMANIA

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In this smiling and fertile country the young Princess early communed with that Nature which has been throughout her life, her love, her ambition, and her guiding star. She attuned her childish fancies to the perfume of sweet flowers, the flowing of clear rivers, and the murmuring of gentle breezes. When summer clothed the valley in its sweetest dress, she ran hither and thither, as happy as a bird on the mountain trees; when snow fell, and winter wrapped all the land in its virginal shroud, she walked under the pines which bent with the weight of their icy armour; or, if the inclement weather forbade her to go out, she lifted her casement to the snow-birds that came in flocks to partake of her childish bounty.

The young Princess began at a very early age to study seriously. Not only the Romance languages—Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, and English—were faithfully acquired, but she likewise evinced an unusual taste for science, political economy, and poetry. In one of her private letters written to an old friend, her Majesty says that at ten years of age she had already written some verses, and at the age of fourteen she composed a short story.

“I could not struggle against it,” she says; “I

was obliged to be impetuous ; I could not keep quiet. In my heart I was grateful to all those who had had patience with me, but when the world of poetry revealed itself to me I saw everything in another light."

It is certain that Princess Elisabeth was not only an unusually gifted child, but that she also possessed the highly strung temperament of those who have been specially endowed by nature ; she was nervous, restless, and ambitious, and having passed the greater part of her extreme youth with few or no companions of her own age—if we except her brothers and Mademoiselle von Bibra—her mental precocity can scarcely be a matter of wonder. To her, as to others intelligent and simple-minded, solitude was a boon, a relief, an unconscious teacher, a companion, a mentor, and a spur to all intellectual attainment.

The Princess Elisabeth was extremely pious, and found both comfort and joy in her religion ; she looked upon the realities of life and death with a strange philosophy, and was often heard to speak of death as a state of perfect happiness. These sentiments might seem extreme in one so young, but allowance must be made for her education, her

natural enthusiasm, and her personal surroundings. Most children brought up alone, if they do not become selfish, at least acquire a domineering habit of absoluteness and egotism ; her Highness, on the contrary, evinced a sweetness of disposition and an unselfishness of character which made her remarkable, even to her parents and relations.

From his birth Prince Otto, the Queen's younger brother, suffered from a terrible and incurable affliction. He absorbed the attention of all the family, but his sister Elisabeth became his chief companion and nurse. Although but a few years older than himself she tended him with the watchfulness of a mother, listened to his whims with angelic patience, and never considered any plan for her own amusement without first turning over in her mind how the result would affect her brother Otto. This thoughtfulness and preoccupation lent her a gravity far beyond her years. The moment she was free, playing amid the flowers and birds and sunshine, she was the happiest, gayest, and youngest of all the young children ; but the instant she recalled to her mind her brother's illness, and made her way to the sick-chamber, the brightness of youth vanished ; she

became a grave, tender little mother, all sweetness, all patience, all quietness.

Before she had reached her tenth year, she began to remark and distinguish the different visitors in the castle. Prince Hermann, her father, was a great patron of arts and letters, and delighted to gather round him the master-spirits in literature, poetry, and the fine arts. Amongst other celebrated visitors, the Princess met Ernest Maurice Arndt, the poet, Bunsen, Neukomm, Clement Parthes, and Jacob Bernads.

Arndt was a very frequent visitor at Neue Wied, and the little Princess Elisabeth soon learned to repeat by heart his beautiful and patriotic verses. Nothing could exceed the Princess's reverence for men of letters, or, in fact, for men in any rank of life who had distinguished themselves in their chosen career; and one of the prettiest pictures which is remembered by her governess, Madame Lavater, is the little Elisabeth sitting on the poet's knee and listening with flushed cheeks and widely-dilated eyes to the flowing verses of the grey-haired singer.

Prince Hermann went for a short time to Bonn, and was so well pleased with his stay there that he decided upon making this interesting city a regular

resort. The principal reason of this visit was to seek the best medical advice for young Prince Otto, later to undergo an operation for his malady, which attempt was as futile as painful. This annual visit to Bonn, although delightful to the Princess, could never wean her affections from Castle Neue Wied. She loved her home with a fond unreasoning love, and already showed how essentially she differed from ordinary children, inasmuch as, while such children delight in change, in new scenes, and new amusements, the little girl always preferred, above and beyond every other pleasure, the beauties of her ancestral home; and to re-live there hours which represented the beginning and end of her young, happy life.

When Princess Elisabeth was ten years of age Prince Otto's health became the excuse for more travelling, and the family went to Paris, where they spent the best part of the year. The previous year Prince Hermann's health had likewise required a change, and he had visited North America and Cuba, in company with his brother-in-law, Prince Nicholas of Nassau. A series of most interesting letters written from the New World by the Prince were published

later in a local journal and copied extensively throughout the German press.

The Germans are perhaps the one nation of the world in whom the love of home, family life, and family ties take precedence of all other considerations. The Princes of Wied without exception possessed this virtue. They were so perfectly united in mind, in feeling, and in habit that it was impossible for one of them to remain long away from the others. Prince Hermann's letters were filled with the marvels and glories and beauties of the New World. He wrote of its commerce, its industries, of the universities, of the great lakes, endless rivers, and magnificent forests ; in short, of everything which peoples those rich and fertile countries, but he added : "Nothing can interest me very long. My thoughts are constantly in my home ; my happiness is with my wife and children and those I love."

It was after this North American trip that Prince Hermann installed his family in Paris. They spent a year in the great capital, and while there Princess Elisabeth, with her brothers and some other little ones, followed a course of studies under the celebrated Abbé Gaultier.

The young students passed a very pleasant and happy life in Paris. The beauty of the French metropolis, the companionship of children of her own age, and the various amusements provided for the princely scholars, chased away the whole, or at least a part, of Princess Elisabeth's melancholy. She laughed and danced and played with her young companions, and one morning Marshal von Bibra, chamberlain and friend of the Prince, found the little students, headed by the little Elisabeth, in the midst of a marionette show. She had written the comedy, the dolls were dressed up for actors, the toys and playthings were the accessories, the children themselves, the so-called artists, filling the rôles of Punch and Judy and their troupe.

Princess Elisabeth tried in vain to hide her book and to stop the performance, but her parents professed themselves so pleased with the entertainment that she was persuaded to continue, and in the end received, with the other little performers, the heartiest applause and congratulations.

In the June of 1854 the family returned from Paris to Neue Wied; the winter was spent at home, and Princess Elisabeth began to undertake serious

and regular studies, music especially, for which she had already shown such admirable and distinguished talent.

It seems almost incredible that a child of twelve should have been so decided in her tastes and predilections. She was not only very positive with regard to her various studies, but expressed herself very clearly as to the length of time she ought to devote to each, as well as the ability of her masters, and the general characteristics of the educational work assigned to her: in another this extreme precocity would have been alarming, but with her, every task was undertaken with such order, faith, and perseverance that people forgot the tenderness of her years in the self-imposed regularity with which she pursued her tasks.

She evinced such extraordinary facility for foreign languages that she was dubbed the female Mezzofanti; her Latin, English, and Italian were so perfect that she could translate from one to the other equally well, either in prose or poetry, and as she was extremely fond of the Classics, she made several elaborate studies from Ovid and Plato; comprising translations and critical essays on the *Metamorphoses* and the *Republic*.

From the year 1858 to 1860, tutors, professors, and governesses were banished from the house, each and all declaring that the gifted young pupil had passed beyond the limits of even the most elaborate curriculum ; in short, the pupil was herself a more finished scholar than any of her distinguished masters. Then began a period of desultory reading : everything in classic or modern literature was devoured, digested, and commented upon ; the Princess's fine intelligence and habit of application soon made her a perfect mine of knowledge, while she had so thoroughly studied the French dramatic authors that she could quote from memory entire scenes from Molière, Racine, and Corneille.

Amongst the poets, Shakespeare, Victor Hugo, and Tasso held the first place ; and in fictional prose the works of Charlotte Brontë, Sir Walter Scott, and Bulwer Lytton were her favourite authors. One work particularly touched the young Princess, a book which we presume has been read more by enthusiastic youth than any work—not “Robinson Crusoe”—viz., “The Wide, Wide World,” by Elizabeth Wetherell. The Princess said, after having finished it, that she knew every word by heart, and might read a thousand

other English novels without any one of them ever being able to take the place of this one in her memory.

Of Scott's works she preferred "Ivanhoe," and from perusing the others became as fully conversant with Scotch character and scenery as if she had spent a portion of her life—to quote her favourite author—"in the land of the mountain and the flood."

## CHAPTER II.

At this time Prince Otto's illness took a very serious turn. On the 12th March, 1860, Professor Busch, of Bonn, performed an operation, but the gentle patient never rallied, and his death, which took place some months after, was the first to plunge in mourning the Wied family circle.

Princess Elisabeth suffered most acutely from this loss, for, as with most women, the presence of sickness and suffering in one beloved only attached her all the more closely to the sufferer. The sudden cessation of any active responsibility created a melancholy void in her existence. Her father falling ill shortly after, the house became one of silence and tears and solitude.

At the age of sixteen her Highness was not only an accomplished linguist and a delightful conversationalist, but was also a musician of remarkable promise. She particularly delighted in Rubinstein,

Mozart, and the great classics ; she played the piano, harp, and organ with delightful facility, and became so enamoured of the first-named instrument that in consequence of her assiduous application her health began to suffer. In short, every study attempted by this ambitious young Princess was followed up with such ardour and obstinate perseverance that her parents and tutors were always obliged to restrict her studies, and to shorten her hours of serious application.

It seems almost exaggeration to add that her Highness immediately afterwards began the study of drawing and painting in oils ; it had been hoped that she would consent to take some rest ; her mental system was over-worked, and her nerves in a weak and alarming state, but her organisation was such that she could not remain idle, and the variety of her numerous occupations promised greater repose than she could have procured had she remained with absolutely nothing to do.

There were few visitors to the castle of "Meine Ruhe," as Carmen Sylva named her ancestral home, but those who were gratified by a visit to Neue Wied never left the princely gates without bearing there-

from a charming souvenir of the Princess and her family.

Although somewhat distant from the village, the castle was easy of access, and whether prince or cottager, poet, or peasant, whosoever entered this domain was received with the noble hospitality characteristic of the House of Wied.

Occasional visitors, however, were rare, and the Princess passed her life almost after the fashion of princesses in fairy tales, invisible for days, and months, and years, and suddenly, as if at the stroke of the genii's wand, appearing at village feast, or ball, or State ceremony. Her little Highness became almost a legend in her native village, but in her own domain she was constantly seen, gathering flowers on the banks of the Wied, roaming through the shady avenues, followed by three magnificent St. Bernards ; swinging in a hammock under the full-blossomed acacia, conjuring up fancies and figures in the dream-realms of her mind, or reciting some of her verses to the dignified but sympathetic maid of honour, attendant upon the person of her young mistress.

The Princess never tired of this sweet communing with nature ; to her the woods were a revelation,

the wild flowers companions, and the songs of the birds echoes of her own joyous thoughts. Thus the spring passed, and the summer, and the autumn of 1858.

The idleness of those long June days and autumnal evenings had so refreshed the Princess, mentally and physically, that she undertook a journey to Italy and Switzerland. This was the first time she had seen any world outside of her own home, but, in spite of the beauties of this other land of mountain and song, her heart soon yearned for the Rhine, for the forests of Neue Wied, and for the old home overlooking the Moselle and the Wied valleys. She had been so long accustomed to solitude and to the absolute liberty of her home life that she looked upon the world with terror, despised conventionalities, and was often oblivious to the social etiquette required from her rank and station.

In 1860 she was sent to Berlin on a visit to the Queen, the late Empress Augusta—who desired to have the gifted young lady for some time amongst her more favoured ladies of honour. However, her manners were so strange and so totally free from the rigidity of Court etiquette that she frightened the

maids and gentlemen in waiting, and appears herself to have felt great discomfort at the stiffness and ceremony of her surroundings.

In referring to this visit she even wrote: "In the salon I was obliged to exercise the most painful vigilance over myself, so as not only to converse with moderation, but in all things to keep within the strict limits of etiquette."

This year Princess Elisabeth was confirmed, and in the following autumn made another tour with her family through Switzerland to the lakes of North Italy. On their return thence Prince Otto's health grew very much worse. Prince Hermann likewise became a confirmed invalid, and kept his room for weeks at a time; his wife was also ailing, and already the house had become a house of mourning.

Princess Elisabeth so divided her time as to be several hours at her brother's bedside, and spent three hours regularly in companionship with her beloved father. She read to him and undertook his correspondence; classified State, civil, and family documents, and became her dear parent's representative, not only in household affairs, but also in the management of his various estates. In spite of her

constant occupation and readily assumed cheerfulness, the Princess was anything but light-hearted ; the journal kept by her, and even the slightest jottings in her birthday book, show that her life then at best was a struggle, and she was beginning to sow the first seeds of disheartenment, unrest, and self-questioning.

It was in this year, 1860, that she visited Berlin with her companion, Fraulein Lavater, and in the same year wrote the letter above quoted, referring to her lack of knowledge of etiquette and of Court manners.

A curious anecdote is related about this visit, and the Princess's first meeting with her future husband. It will be seen that the introduction differed in every way from the ceremonies usually observed by such august personages. One afternoon, Princess Elisabeth was descending the staircase in great haste, when she missed her footing, and fell headlong into the arms of a stranger, at that moment in the act of ascending. As soon as she recovered her breath, she looked into the face of her timely preserver, hoping to recognise some friend of the family, but he was totally unknown to her, and when, later, Prince Charles of Hohenzollern was presented, she blushingly recollected that—they had met before !

In response to Queen Augusta's inquiring look, his Highness hastened to explain the circumstance, and in addition to the thanks of her Majesty, received also those of Princess Elisabeth, for having averted what might have been a serious accident.

In the January of 1862 Prince Hermann became so seriously ill that he took to his bed, never to leave it; while poor Prince Otto's martyrdom also drew to its end, and, on the 10th February, he breathed his last. During the ensuing winter Prince Hermann was carried to Baden Baden, and, in the same season, the Princess was presented, and attended the Court balls at Würtemberg. She also went twice a week to Carlsruhe, to take lessons in music from Kalliwoda, and lessons in flower-painting from Madame Schroeder.

About this time the Princess again sustained a loss in the death of her most intimate, in fact her only friend, daughter of Field-Marshal von Bibra before named. Princess Elisabeth took this calamity so deeply to heart that she was threatened with a very serious malady. Through incessant contemplation of illness, suffering, and death, her mind was over-worked, her nerves were strained to their utmost



tension, and she lost, not only her former vivacity, but also her physical strength, and with that, naturally, her powers of mental endurance. The doctors not only ordered absolute rest, but also change of scene. Accordingly she was committed to the care of her aunt, the Grand Duchess Helen of Russia, and prepared to spend some time absent from Neue Wied.

In the autumn of 1863 we find the Grand Duchess and her niece at the charming watering-place of Ouchy, on the Lake of Geneva. Here, amidst the delightful society constituting the circle of her distinguished relative, the Princess was surrounded by all that was noted in art, science, and letters; for the first time she appreciated the beauty of Swiss scenery, so especially sympathetic at this point, and so different from the sombre mountains and forests of Neue Wied. Before long Princess Elisabeth had regained, not only her health, but also her spirits; she laughed and chatted and sang; wrote verses, played the piano, and conversed with such intelligence that her aunt was charmed, and determined to carry her back with her to spend the winter in Russia.

Life at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg was

one round of gaiety, of splendid fêtes and magnificent State ceremonies. However, the first excitement worn off, the severe Court etiquette told upon this child of nature ; she began to be excessively fatigued, and requested as a change, permission to resume her studies.

Music became a passion, and the great Rubinstein gave her lessons. The German historian, Mme. Stackelberg, quotes a letter she wrote from St. Petersburg, to her mother ; she refers to her studies with the above-named professor, and especially to the sensations awakened by his playing.

“The consciousness of my very slight talent caused me to lose all courage,” she wrote ; and further on, evidently in reference to the same master : “Under such power, it was as if one listened to some mystic legend, as if one heard the music of the spheres. There are a poetry and tenderness in his playing which are really enchanting. His genius is such, that beside it prodigious force and culture appear but secondary affairs. . . . I have never heard anything to equal it ; his touch breathes magic, and, added to his talent, is a double beauty like the dew on the flower, or the bloom on the purple grape.”

On the 4th May, 1864, the Princess wrote from Moscow to her mother, the Princess of Wied, as follows:—

“ We are in Moscow, the old patriotic city, with its one- and two-storeyed houses, green roofs, and several hundred churches, all shining in their most variegated colours. When we arrived, a sunbeam fell through the thick clouds on some gilded cupola; the view from the Kremlin was highly impressive (curious), unhappily not sunny, but green. We look down upon nothing but verdant roofs. The dimensions of the streets are such that one scarcely knows which is street and which square. It is too wonderful. The city, with its one-storeyed structures set in their surrounding gardens, is quite like the country—almost like a village—and yet it is very beautiful. One sees only little houses, many-hued, and much more highly-coloured churches: vivid blue with bright green roof and domes, or red, with green cupolas, or red, green and blue in the most fantastic mixture. Only in bright sunshine could I imagine Moscow peculiarly beautiful, when the hundreds of domes glisten and throw their rays on the green roofs, here, there, and everywhere.

"In the Kremlin I saw the church treasure, also the treasure and armour chamber, in which all the Imperial crowns are kept. I take a particular interest in this spot, for the sake of the age of these relics, and likewise the historical remembrances which are attached to them. In this room we also find the enormous silver kettles in which holy oil is prepared and sanctified. Every three years, during three days of continuous prayers, it is boiled and mixed with perfumed herbs, then it is blessed and consecrated in the church, and is called '*la sainte crême*.' Forty to fifty amphoræ are filled with it, and from far and wide come prayers to possess some of this oil, because they use it for the dedication of churches, as well as for ceremonials of birth and death. For me it has something touching to think in how many ways men endeavour to hallow themselves, and although we are disposed to ask what is the benefit of this holy oil and holy water, there lies within the mere idea and its fulfilment a child-like desire to become quite pure; there is an unchanging faith in the power of prayer, which in itself is alone able to sanctify all things. In the Greek Church I find very many childish and cheerful ideas, and fewer superstitions than in the

Roman Catholic belief—nothing, however, of the solemnity and earnestness of our religion. However, it strikes me that our Church in its noblest form (as I should also mention other Churches in their noblest form) is specially suited to the German character : we all have, more or less, the tendency to sound ourselves, probe into our own hearts, and to wholly retire within ourselves, and only out of our inmost souls to draw the fulness of the knowledge of God.”

### CHAPTER III.

THE rigorous winter in Russia soon told upon the Princess's health; she was attacked by a malady which placed her life in danger, and she had no sooner entered into convalescence than the news of her father's death reached her. This cruel loss retarded her recovery, and the idea of his having died while she was absent from home was a constantly recurring pain; but she bore her loss, as she had borne that of her brother Otto, with Christian patience and resignation. She was surrounded by the most loving kindness and solicitude; every possible distraction that her mourning permitted was procured for her, and life in the Kremlin, with its multitudinous ceremonies and fêtes, the splendid gardens and promenades attached to this royal residence, not only helped her to pass her time both agreeably and cheerfully, but she even fancied that Russia reminded her of her old home, Meine Ruhe: and in this ducal palace gradually

re-lived her old life of poetry, music, and classic reminiscence.

In June the Grand Duchess Helen conveyed her niece back to Germany, but the sight of her ancestral walls, sad and silent, took from her all the pleasure she had anticipated from this home-coming. Her melancholy became so deep-seated that her aunt insisted on taking her to Ouchy, the charming autumnal residence on the Lake of Geneva, but for the first time in her life change of scene failed to benefit the Princess.

The following year she visited Ragatz with the Grand Duchess, and in the January of 1867 she went with another relative, the Princess Thérèse of Oldenburg, to visit Naples and Southern Italy.

Her pleasure in, and appreciation of, the volcanic city is best described in some of her letters.

“ NAPLES VILLA,

ST. BRIDGET,

19<sup>th</sup> January, 1867.

“ Yesterday we moved here. Since several days the sirocco blows and the sea is lashed into furious whirlpools. The sea-birds fly across the bounding foam, and last night a hurricane made the house

tremble. Clouds are dense, low, and completely hide Vesuvius ; the wind and rain are beating against the window in horrible concert, while the sea is green and grey, and phosphorescent lights flit over the crested waves. It is a barbarous world, but I do not mind this tumultuous raging ; let it continue, only I should like to fly with the tempest, expose myself all alone to its fury, and hurl out upon the waters a wild song which no one but myself could hear, no one disturb : which, although I should sing it at the highest pitch of my voice, would still be for me, and me alone. Then immediately after, as quiet as a lamb, I would return home, and no longer hear the clamour. But the cloud-veil again unfolds, and a reddish light spreads itself calmly and tranquilly over the foaming main ; it stretches farther and farther from the horizon to my very feet, and across the path of the storm, illuminating, tranquillising, and bringing joyous thoughts to my heart. Could this latter but learn to be more quiet, it might likewise dominate the tempest. Perhaps, however, in its most secret depths it is really calm, for, in spite of everything, my own fireside is the haven which protects, the anchor which holds, when the sails are torn asunder."

" 20th January.

" When we awoke this morning, the sea visible from our hillside was lit up like a mirror. The windows and doors were wide open, and a real May breeze penetrated our hearts and homes, inspiring me with joyful thoughts. All my forces and all my love of life are revivified. . . . If I lift up my head I see in front of me the blue sombre mass, Vesuvius—Vesuvius, whose summit hides itself in the clouds. To the left, looking downwards, the seething city is gilded with sunshine. To the right the Mediterranean stretches away, sharp cut by the denticulated heights of the Isle of Capri. The city for the first time appears to me in all its enchanting beauty, and for the first time I can plunge heart and soul into the splendours of this magnificent nature. A peace which I have not felt for a long time has entered into my soul; I feel as though I could rock myself on the air, and as though I had an hundred wings to bear me towards the sun; I feel a healing balm penetrating my breast, causing it to expand, to live and breathe anew. It is worth while to struggle with the tempest in order to enjoy the subsequent calm. The sea murmurs softly, as if it feared to trouble the silence. Everything seems to say to me, ' Peace, peace ! ' "

## CHAPTER IV.

IN the spring of 1867 the Princess returned to Meine Ruhe, and in the month of August went to Carlsbad, thence to Paris to visit the great exhibition. It was here that her royal Highness suffered from momentary deafness, and from a constant pain in the head. The year was prolific in continental trips, the Princess returning to Ragatz, and later on visiting Norway and Sweden. She was so delighted with this country of beautiful legends and idyllic poetry that she learned Swedish in order to read the works of the native authors, more especially Frithiof's "Sagas of Tegner."

In 1868 she visited Heidelberg. Among the ruins and surroundings of the old castle her poetic nature was, perhaps, for the first time most fully awakened; in short, of all the places she had ever seen, none charmed her more than this, and in a recent letter she refers to the delightful town, and writes: "I adore

Heidelberg. With my aunt I once passed there the three most perfect months of my life."

Princess Elisabeth inherited from her father, Prince Hermann of Wied, a mind of extraordinary vigour. She not only sounded questions which are supposed to belong chiefly to the feminine world, but science, the fine arts, politics, and even political economy were studied in turn and thoroughly investigated by her large and liberal intelligence. She was particularly interested in the situation of European polities, and agreed with her father about the vesting of petty feudal rights in the great German sovereignty, to-day exercised by the young Emperor-King, William of Prussia.

She was also very much interested in the Porte, and particularly in those countries whose legends, poetry, and magnificent natural scenery appeal most strikingly to the poetical nature. She always named the Carpathians with enthusiasm, and once, in speaking of Roumania, its slaves, disbanded people, and decaying provinces, uttered these words, almost a prophecy: "The only throne that could have any attraction for me would be the throne of Roumania, for there, even for me, there would be something to

do." At the outset, the Princess's marriage with Prince Charles of Roumania was merely a political alliance, but in the end became a real love match.

The Queen has since confessed that the young man into whose arms she once accidentally fell, was the only person who from that time forward occupied all her thoughts, and on the 15th November, 1869, the marriage was celebrated at Neiwwed. On the 18th the royal couple set out for their new residence, to found a new home among new people, a new race, and for them, a new land in this old land of the sun—Roumania.

## CHAPTER V.

IN speaking of Queen Elisabeth of Roumania under her poetic pseudonym of Carmen Sylva, who by dint of her fine literary work has conquered and holds so exceptional a place amongst the sovereigns of Europe, it is but natural to say something of the man to whom her royal destiny has been attached. Nor is it less important to have some exact notion of this new country of their adoption, about which Europe at the present moment appears to be unusually occupied.

The vague ideas which exist about Roumania in the minds of many—indeed of a very great many—were they not so discouraging, would be delightful. We hear of America and Americans till Europe, I think, must be sick of the sound of the name. Next in the wave of surfeit comes Germany and her eternal empire; Russia with her intrigues and intrepidities; Italy with her constitutional manœuvre; France with her Republicans, her Opportunists, her Recidivists, her

Legitimists, her Bonapartists ; Spain with her Carlos and Carolinas, and so on, *ad infinitum*, through the length and breadth of civilisation. Hence, to properly explain the what, the why, and the wherefore of Roumania, her sovereigns and her institutions, her people and her provinces, we are obliged to go through a complete course of geography, history, and ethnography.

It has been very much the custom of late to place King Charles of Roumania under a false light, and likewise the habit of so-called historiographers to spread abroad a mass of errors about the people and country of Roumania, as malevolent as grotesque. We read daily in the press, in books of travel by the most celebrated writers, fantastic, inexplicable assertions about the Orient, assertions which are anomalies, and a confusion of names worthy of the “Heathen Chinee” when he appears in San Francisco, and sells his first cargo of tea—in English.

Roumania is confounded with Roumelia, Moldavia with Moravia, Bucharest with Budapest, and a personage lately at the head of one of the European powers pushed his republican fantasy to the point of giving to Roumania the name of Bucharia ; although we must confess the similarity of names of this Asiatic

province with that of the capital of the young kingdom of Roumania is such that a Western savage might be excused for the mistake, but a ruler on a continental throne, or a boy in the lowest form of any institute in Europe guilty of such an error would not be excusable. He would be deservedly laughed at, and returned on the hands of his parents as “lacking in the upper storey.”

This stupidity is a comical display of the ignorance of great statesmen in the matter of geography. It might be pardonable, but the obstinacy in continuing in the error becomes a grave affair.

The races that border the Danube are surely distinct enough each in itself to own a national appellation. However, in spite of their characteristic name, language, and Latin type, Roumanians are constantly confounded with Servians, Montenegrins, Dorian-Greeks, Bulgarians, and other Slavonic types inhabiting the Dalmatian peninsula.

Under these circumstances it is not unreasonable that we should touch upon the country and people now brought into prominence by a ruler such as King Charles of Roumania, and his gifted consort, Elisabeth, Princess of Wied.

Roumania is a country situate between Russia, Austria, and Turkey, to-day inhabited by the descendants of the old Roman colonists who conquered ancient Dacia under the Emperor Trajan, a race of men who since the time of Alexander the Great have been amongst the most valiant of the Thracian barbarians, and who have handed down the most splendid and triumphant records to history and historical study.

A singular characteristic of the Roumanian which probably struck the Princess Elisabeth as it might strike any student of Roman history, is that when casually asked, "What are you?" he never answers, as would an Italian, or a Frenchman, or a German, this or that or the other relating to his own nation. The Roumanian does not say, "I am a Roumanian," but replies, "I am a Roman." However, such is the strange destiny of this race of nine millions of souls that diplomacy, usually supposed to be serviceable for straightening international errors and prejudices, has perhaps done more than anything else to destroy and weaken the dominion of Roumania; to insensibly detach it from the Roumania of old, known to the student of antiquity. Rome and her conquests and powers are a thing of the past, not forgotten but

cherished, and although we may well establish a difference between the inhabitants of the banks of the Tiber and the banks of the Danube, the fact remains that the only Latin race which speaks a pure Roman is almost unknown in Central Europe, while it exists, as in the long ago, in Roumania.

Although as well versed in European history and geography as many a laurelled professor, when Prince Charles of Hohenzollern was called to be Prince-Regnant of Roumania, the Princess began a course of study relative to the people, language, and country that were to represent her future life, not unworthy the efforts of a Gibbon or a Macaulay. An ardent student of Roman history, an ardent admirer of the Latin tongue, she learned by intuition that the new country of her adoption was but one of the frontiers of ancient Rome; the people descendants of that mighty race who represented Rome on the borders of the Danube—who speak comparatively pure Roman or Romansch, that language so dear to the heart of the student—and of that race known in the early ages as the Dacians, the most powerful of all the oriental warlike tribes.

Most of the ladies at present occupying European

thrones, and most women called to sovereign state, would have anticipated their position by ordering sumptuous attire wherewith to adorn the royal person ; but Princess Elisabeth chose rather to clothe her mind in the splendid raiment of antique lore, than her body with the richest of Mechlin or finest of brocade. The booksellers of Europe received orders innumerable, but the dressmakers, jewellers, &c., were sadly neglected ; and when she set out for her new country, her bouquet was a Roumanian grammar, and her travelling itinerary, the landmarks of old Roman and Dacian conquest.

It may readily be imagined with what surprise the Princess Elisabeth made the acquaintance of the land which was to be her future home, and discovered that instead of going to a country which fifteen years ago was a vassal of Turkey, she was but going to a place where she would take up all her old Roman souvenirs ; to a country purified through past suffering, now on a plane with the other civilised countries of Europe, and predestined to play, as in the past, a great rôle ; this time not under the shadow of Rome, but of the Orient—Roumania, once so backward in every art and evidence of modern progress, the Mecca

of the hundred different tongues that crossed Caucasus or Carpathian, now a modern kingdom, with gas, electricity, and machinery ; and nearly three thousand miles of railway, silvering mountain and valley and metropolis ; Roumania, which has joined her provinces and freed her slaves, whose capital, Bucharest, is rightly called the Paris of the Orient ; whose society is polished like the best European society ; whose educational, military, and civil institutions may vie in excellence with the best similar institutions in the known world, and whose poets, historians, and artisans bid fair to dissipate for ever the absurd and almost universal ignorance which reigns with regard to this country, its people, its position, and its importance.

Speaking of his Majesty Carol I., we cannot do better than to quote from Mr. William Beatty Kingston's admirable work, "*Monarchs I have Met*," the following anent King Charles of Roumania :

"Carol I., 'din gracia lui Dumnezeu si prin voința Nationala Rege al Romaniei,' or in our vernacular, 'Charles the First, by the grace of God and the will of the nation, King of Roumania,' is the second son of the late Prince Anthony of Hohenzollern, whose

sovereign rights were vested in the Prussian throne thirty-eight years ago, and who, at the time of his death, was the wealthiest gentleman in Germany. His Majesty was born in 1837, entered the Prussian army at an early age—as all the princes of his illustrious house have done since Frederick I. changed his Elector's hat for a royal crown—and served in the first regiment of Guard Dragoons until his twenty-seventh birthday, when an event of supreme importance befell him. The united principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, but recently emancipated from vassalage, and anxious to achieve promotion in European position and international rank, happened to be in want of a constitutional monarch, young, brave, intelligent, good-looking, and influentially connected. This requirement they met by electing Karl-Eitel-Friedrich-Zephyrin-Ludwig von Hohenzollern to rule over them, under the title of Prince of Roumania. It may interest some of my readers to learn how this splendid advancement came to the gallant cavalry captain, son of a mediatised princelet, whose twenty-one years' reign over the Dacians has unquestionably, in the words of our national anthem, been ‘ happy and glorious.’ ”

## CHAPTER VI.

ON Prince Charles becoming King of Roumania he determined to build a royal residence, and the site chosen was the heart of the Carpathians, near the ancient monastery of Sinaïa, facing the torrent of Pelech, one of the most beautiful waterfalls of this celebrated mountain range. Although his Majesty's father was one of the ancient landed proprietors in Germany, Prince Charles, being a second son, brought but a slender heritage to add to the Roumanian royal coffers. When he undertook the building of this castle, he found the undertaking so costly that he was unable to pay for it at once, but devoted towards the cost of the building 300,000 francs a year from his private income. The site he fixed upon, though very picturesque, was almost impracticable for the erection of a dwelling. Whether through volcanic influence, or the tidal wave, or the terrestrial character of the Carpathians themselves, this spot was

discovered to be of unstable land, absolutely unfit for building purposes. However, it was rendered firm by piling, and before a stone of the walls was placed, the subterranean supports and stone foundations had cost a million and a half francs.

After many years, the royal château was finished, and is called Castel Pelech. It resembles very much the châteaus of the Dukes of Sigmaringen ; the interior is marble and of elaborate ornamentation ; the exterior is of feudal architecture recalling the early mediæval strongholds. The ceilings, windows, and doors are ornamented with plaques of rarest carving, made from the scented wood of the forest, and the mammoth doors, rising from floor to ceiling, are likewise carved from single pieces of the giant Carpathian oak.

The palace is furnished with exquisite nicety. Old gold and moss green are the Queen's favourite colours, and we are led from one sumptuous chamber to another, the mind cheered and the eye gladdened by a continuous view of the varying autumnal tints.

The throne-room, or long gallery, is decorated at one end by a magnificent double-stained glass quadrangle. This marvel of the glass painter's art was decorated in honour of the Roumanian Homer, the

people's poet, and Queen's friend, V. Alecsandri, and illustrates several of his principal poems; the first two panels being "Die Perlenreihen, Legende," and "Die Lerche, Legende"; and "Der Ring und der Schleier" forming the subject of the two last panels.

The Queen's private chapel, or music-room, would tax the happiest descriptive powers, and we must content ourselves with saying that it is a chamber where the gods and muses might be inspired, and where mortals at first sight might readily believe themselves transported to enchanted halls, the home not alone of a Carmen Sylva, but of all the sylvan singers.

Here the Queen writes, sings, and plays on the great organ, sits with her ladies embroidering tapes-tries or illuminating missals for the cathedral; and during her stay at the castle passes in this sanctuary some of the happiest hours of her life. The exterior of the castle is being constantly embellished, the grounds stretch wider and deeper into the wooded recesses of the mountains, and the roads leading to the demesne resemble the shady arbours of some magnificent private English estate.



THE QUEEN'S MORNING ROOM AT CASLETT PELECH.



The castle proper is situated almost on the mountain crest, and overlooks the country nearly to the banks of the Danube. The house and grounds are lighted by electricity, and the effect, seen from a distance, is something positively fairy-like; the peasants as they pass murmur their *aves*, the glittering lights of the castle they declare to be lights from heaven, celestial spirits come to protect the Sovereign and his doamna, Elisabetta.

There have been many descriptions of Carmen Sylva and the life of the royal poetess at Sinaïa, but I quote from a letter written to me by Mr. Alecsandri, the following simple sketch.

. . . “If you are curious to know how I pass my time in this fairy château which has been raised as if by enchantment in the heart of the Carpathians, I shall try to give you a short sketch, to which, however, your own imagination must lend animation and colour.

“You must first, then, picture to yourself a castle with turrets and vast terraces raised on the banks of the Pelech, a little mountain torrent which falls in three cascades, and which, on account of its rapidity, is used to work the engine necessary for the electric light.

When night falls, the valley, surrounded by gigantic pines, is illuminated spontaneously, as well as the castle, and both present a most fantastic appearance. A traveller who had lost his way in the mountains on some dark night, suddenly beholding the scene would think it some hallucination. And yet this place, only a short time since, was haunted by the bear and the great eagle of the Carpathians. To-day we see here vast lawns covered with flower-beds, ponds surrounded with fresh verdure, and here and there clumps of noble trees, all of which are enough to inspire an idyl. Quagmires have been transformed into gravelled walks, and the spots which before bore the foot-prints of wild beasts now bear those of civilisation, and of lovely ladies who promenade morn and eve, clad in the gold-embroidered costume of Roumania. Instead of the howling of the wolves one hears sweet voices of those who speak all languages to perfection; even the surrounding mountains take, one would say, a milder aspect in order to become a more worthy frame for such a picture. Our popular legends tell of maidens who in letting fall a pearl from their necklace suddenly saw rise a palace of gold and crystal. We might suppose that



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one of these fairies had passed through the valley of the Pelech and raised all these beauties with the fairy's magic wand.

"In the castle each guest is comfortably lodged, and is free in his movements till one o'clock in the afternoon. Before this hour the time is spent in making excursions in the environs, or in visits, or in meeting in a rotunda of carved oak, where merriment is monarch of the hour, and even the most serious conversation is not unfrequently mixed with bursts of laughter.

"The Queen often leaves her study to surprise us in this retreat and add to the pleasure of the company the charm of her wit and presence. Lunch is at one o'clock in the splendid dining-room, and tea at five o'clock in a handsome salon, style Louis XV. This is also the hour of reading. Sometimes the Queen submits to us her morning's work, and sometimes I am obliged to recite a piece of original poetry; for here I am forced to shake off my laziness or run the risk of dying of hunger. One of these days we shall read some chapters from your works. This their Majesties are eagerly looking forward to.

"Grand dinner at seven o'clock, after which we go

to the music-hall, ornamented with paintings, the subjects taken from the poems of the Queen. A large stained-glass window represents scenes taken from some of my legends. All round this room chairs in sculptured oak are arranged for the company; in the middle are two grand divans which by their luxuriousness invite repose and aid digestion.

"The Queen, who is an excellent musician, presides at the organ; two ladies play the piano, and a young secretary arms himself with the violin. Here for hours are we enchanted by German music, from Mendelssohn, Haydn, Mozart, and sometimes from Wagner. I then beg leave to go and play a few games of billiards with the King, and at ten o'clock all retire to bed to dream of all sorts of things till morning. And the next morning we begin the old routine—and after luncheon, as before—the grave minister disappears behind the fanciful and humorous poet."

## CHAPTER VII.

IN the second half of this century, the ladies of sovereign houses have regarded the exercise of benevolence, as well as the instruction and education of the people, as one of their essential duties. The example set by Queen Elisabeth proves to us that she also proposed to fill such a rôle ; she, who had had from the days of her youth the instinct of teaching, now that she was on the throne, could not leave untilled the fruitful fields of youthful education, and of national civilisation which lay spread before her in such seductive richness.

It was with the most lively solicitude that she undertook to assist in promoting the intellectual development of her pupils of the Asile Hélène, an orphanage in which four hundred and sixty young girls are reared from the age of five till twenty years. In this home they receive instruction in various branches of knowledge, in foreign languages,

in the arts and sciences, and remain in the institution till their final examinations, to become teachers, &c. Most of them marry after the expiration of their studies. The fame of the house is so well established that young men willingly take for wives the girls who have been reared and trained in the Asile Hélène. When these girls marry some professor or teacher, they generally become teachers themselves, and can often earn up to three hundred francs a month.

Queen Elisabeth visits the educational institutions but rarely, and "only to give emulation and joy." . . . "because I find," said she, "that it is good to leave all liberty of action to those who understand their business better than I." "The Grand Duchess Hélène, who was always my model, was more occupied in thought than in person with these things." But she is always present at the examinations, as well at those of the young girls as at those of the Conservatoire. She distributes with her own hand all the prizes, and enhances their value by kind words, which rejoice the teachers as well as the pupils.

We have previously referred to the Queen's musical talent, and it is given to very few persons to

express themselves on this subject as clearly and simply as does her Majesty. At one of the musical réunions at the Conservatoire before mentioned, her Majesty herself directed the exercises, and accompanied some of the pupils in their singing of popular songs.

It is not generally known that music in Roumania and the Roumanian provinces, up to a very recent date, was the special property and accomplishment of the peasants and the lower classes. At the houses of the great reading, conversation, and the eternal tapestry were theme and occupation for the Roumanian nobles : at feasts, suppers, or gala gatherings, professional singers were commanded to entertain the guests. But these singers were not from the opera : they were rather peasants who had been tending sheep in the valley, the Wallachian guide with his Jödels, or the pretty dark-eyed daughter of the Moldavian farmer. These ingenious creatures sing, dance, and act to perfection. I speak in the present, because to-day is the long yesterday of the longed-for to-morrow.

Roumania is rich in a peasant race which has inherited—to quote Gibbon—all the virtues and none of the vices of its ancestry, and the musical instinct

of the Roman of Dacia or the Roman of Rome remains the same, whether in a dark-eyed, chamois-dressed mountaineer carolling a native lay on the borders of the Danube, or in a haunter of the Vatican in velvet jacket and moonlight smile, sending the strains of “Amata Roma” on Angelo’s Bridge, to float in limpid echo over pallid Tiber. Hence we are not surprised at hearing of her Majesty’s success with her singing schools and musical societies, her choristers for the cathedrals, or her virginal choruses—the pick of the flower of youth amongst peasant and populace.

As she writes to Maître Gounod :—

“ Among four hundred young girls, there are fifty or more who can sing charmingly, and even faultlessly, and I would wish to pray all the world to come to my aid to enforce the art of music on my country, as the greatest means of civilisation. It seems to me that without music, earth is a desert.”

We can easily picture to ourselves the arched Gothic room of the palace, rich in warmth, perfume, and colouring ; the Queen seated at the organ, and her four hundred little orphans singing with their sweet voices Gounod’s chorus of “The Ant and the Grasshopper.” We can likewise understand her

Majesty's delight, and how she was on the point, as she says, of sending a telegram to Gounod :—

“ Dear Monsieur Gounod,

“ Do write some more choruses for the orphans of Roumania and their mother.”

Had Byron assisted at some of those evenings we should have missed the wit of :—

“ Oh, the long evenings of duets and trios !  
The admirations and the speculations ;  
The ‘ Mama mias ’ and the ‘ Amor mios ’ ;  
The ‘ Tanti palpitis ’ on such occasions”—

and had more lines like :—

“ It told the triumph of our king ;  
It wafted glory to our God ;  
It made our gladdened valleys ring,  
The cedars bow, the mountains nod ;  
Its sound aspired to Heaven, and there abode.  
Since then, though heard on earth no more,  
Devotion and her daughter Love  
Still bid the bursting spirit soar  
To sounds that seem as from above  
In dreams that day’s broad light cannot remove.”

The Queen's enthusiasm did not stop with listening to her little singers. As before mentioned, she wrote a charming letter to the immortal author of “ Faust,” which by the kindness of M. Gounod, we give here entire, and in its original text.

“SINAIA,

“*le 22 Nov., 1887.*

“MONSIEUR,

“Je vous suis mille fois reconnaissante des belles choses que vous m'avez envoyées, comme de votre admirable composition de la gen. La poesie m'a saisie dans le temps tellement que je l'ai traduite et il me semble que chantée elle arrive seulement à toute sa puissance. N'est-elle pas encore transposée pour contre-alte ? L'hiver dernier j'ai assisté dans notre grand orphelinat au chœur de la Fourmi et de la Cigale, et j'en ai été tellement ravie que j'étais sur le point de vous envoyer le télégramme suivant : ‘Cher Monsieur Gounod ! faites-nous encore des chœurs pour les orphelines de la Roumanie et leur mère !’ Et puis je n'ai pas osé. Mais à présent le voici. Mon secrétaire, Monsieur Scheffer, vous dira combien je serais reconnaissante, si vous nous faisiez encore de belles choses qui sont adorables pour nous. Parmi les 400 jeunes filles il y a une cinquantaine qui chantent gentiment et même juste. Et je voudrais prier tout le monde de me venir en aide pour infliger la musique à mon pays, comme le plus grand moyen civilisateur. Il me semble que sans musique c'est le désert.

“ Monsieur Brialmont m'avait promis de vous amener ici, mais il est difficile de promettre pour les autres ! Et nous parlerions de Mozart, comme nous en parlerions ! Car je suis à genoux devant lui : je voudrais embrasser chaque note qu'il a écrite ! Quand j'entends quelques notes de ‘Don Juan,’ mon cœur se met à danser.

“ Vous avez exprimé l'aimable désir de composer de mes méchants vers français, mais ils n'ont été qu'une plaisanterie ; je n'ai aucune idée de la versification française. C'est comme qui jouerait du violon et se mettrait à jouer du cello sans l'avoir étudié. Il ne sait même pas tenir l'archet.

“ Je vous remercie encore de tout cœur et j'espère vous serrer la main un jour.”

“ ELISABETH.”

In every country, whether civilised or barbarous, the music-lore of each and every one has something specially attractive to the stranger coming among the people and listening to these songs for the first time, and if we are to accept the Wolffian theory that great Homer was none other than a singer of folk-lore, the immortal interpreter of the people

and their songs for all time to come, the Queen has been very much helped by Vasilie Alecsandri, the late Dacian Poet-Laureate, lovingly styled the "Homer of the Danube," and recently Roumanian Minister at Paris. His Excellency's songs for the people are become the poet-lore of Roumania, and are sung throughout the length and breadth of the land, as the lark carols in the waving trees, or the nightingale haunts the roses of the Ottoman vales. Not every queen, however exalted in mind or station, could find ready-made and at hand such a poet, such a people, and such a mine of priceless folk-lore. That her Majesty has known how to utilise these treasures, and has known how to bring them to the happiest fertility, reflects more than words can say on her humility and patience and obedience to her poet-teacher and friend, Alecsandri.

While we are on the question of music, we cannot do better than quote from Mr. Beatty Kingston's undeniable authority, "Music and Manners," the following anent the songs, music, language, &c., of Roumania and her provinces :

"There is unquestionably something about the songs sung and the dances played throughout the

length and breadth of the Dacian lands (which comprise Bessarabia, the Bukovina, and a considerable portion of Transylvania, as well as the kingdom of Roumania proper, whilom the united principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia) that reminds the discriminating ear of Turkish, Hungarian, and Slavonic strains. This circumstance is readily to be accounted for by the fact that Dacia, for a thousand years past, if not more, has been an oppressed and down-trodden land, the favourite battle-ground of Eastern Europe, surrounded on all sides by warlike and rapacious neighbours, whose favourite recreation it was to overrun the 'sweet and lovely country,' carry off its sons and daughters into slavery, and every now and anon, annex it altogether. The Roumanians of the Middle Ages, as well as of a more modern epoch, although they frequently fought their invaders with great gallantry and resolution, were nearly always in a state of vassaldom, writhing under the armed heel of some neighbour mightier than themselves. It is not to be wondered at that their successive conquerors made deep impressions upon their manners and customs, and even imparted various foreign flavours to their national music. That they retained their

language, originally the ‘army Latin,’ or *lingua franca*, commonly spoken in the foreign legions of the Roman Empire (two of which colonised Dacia in the time of Trajan) is an extraordinary illustration of the instructive race-conservatism exemplified in Western Europe by the Welsh, Scotch Highlanders, Bretons, Basques, and Swiss Roumanians. Of course, Hungarian, Polish, and Turkish occupations of Roumania forcibly introduced a large number of foreign words into the Dacian vernacular; indeed, when I first began to study Roumanian, exactly twenty years ago, *sub consule Cusá*, twenty-four per cent. of its total vocabulary consisted of Magyar, Slav, Turkish, and even Greek importations, the remaining seventy-six per cent. being of pure Latin origin. I may observe—for the fact is an interesting one, though it certainly has nothing to do with Roumanian music—that since Roumania practically shook off the Turkish yoke in 1866, her leading philologists, amongst them Prince Jón Ghica, her present representative at the Court of St. James, Vasilie Alecsandri, her Poet-Laureate and Minister in Paris, and Majorescu, formerly her Minister of Education, have been assiduously engaged in purifying the Roumanian tongue,

and ridding it of the barbarous idioms that had crept into it in the manner above indicated. Their efforts have been so far crowned with success that the *limbă română* of to-day only contains about five words of alien origin in every hundred, retained in deference to popular convenience, and, freed from the cramping trammels of the Cyrillic alphabet, is as well ordered and learnable a literary language as either of its first cousins, Italian or Spanish."—(Chap V., vol. I.)

Queen Elisabeth has founded an embroidery school, the Scola Elisabetha Doamna. Twenty of the poorest girls are here taught to read, to write, and especially to work the embroideries of the country. Patterns, Byzantine for the most part, are collected in order to be copied in the national costumes. Peasant women generally work from old ecclesiastical ornaments, or copy some flowers with needle and the tinsel threads used for chasuble or church ornament even up to the present day.

Certain ideas are hereditary and different in different instincts, from which result combinations of a sort at once so simple and so original that they captivate the eye by continual change of colour. All Roumanian women have a natural taste in colours.

They embroider with much skill and taste on the special tissues of the country. The first association for the poor which the Queen established is called the Société Elisabetha, and distributes each year thirty thousand francs' worth of wood to the poor. This society is composed of more than a hundred ladies, who every winter organise a lottery at the theatre, and give several magnificent balls. The King and Queen, together with the highest society, assist at these gatherings. On these occasions the ladies wear the richly-ornamented Roumanian national costume in order that the peasants may earn their winter livelihood by the sale of their embroideries.

The Queen's patronage and example are so contagious that many similar societies have been formed throughout the country.

Her Majesty has also founded a woman's association bureau called L'Albina, for the benefit of women of the poorer class who are unfit for heavy labour. From a very small beginning of six individuals, the members of this society have increased to perhaps as many thousands. Many of them have bought sewing-machines, and have become apt proficients in the mechanical art of the seamstress. In 1884 the Albine

society alone manufactured and distributed twenty thousand tents, and also made innumerable sets of uniform for the soldiers, for the barracks, and for the hospitals.

Another association founded by the Queen is called the Concordia, which has for object the promotion of industries, especially of weaving. Although in Roumania hemp grows wild after tilling and manuring of the soil, a newer and finer quality has been procured, this latter in such quantity that new looms have been established and some old ones, long since fallen into disuse, re-equipped and set in motion. In an annex of the Concordia is La Furnica, especially devoted to the buying of articles of Roumanian handicraft, tissues, embroideries, &c., &c. The peasants receive ready money for their work, which is afterwards re-sold by La Furnica at the bazaars and fêtes organised by the Queen.

In short, it would occupy volumes to recount the initiative works of the Queen or their result in this land of her adoption. Whether on a throne or "below the salt," it has been given to few women to plan, undertake, and carry out works with the success that her Majesty has achieved in planning, undertaking, and carrying out these important tasks in Roumania.

## CHAPTER VIII.

PRINCESS ELISABETH soon became devotedly attached to her adopted country. Although in her exalted station she was still slave to a certain Court etiquette, yet she speedily found herself almost as much at home amongst the Carpathians and provinces of Roumania as she had been near her beloved Westerwald and her adored home of Meine Ruhe.

She had once said, "In Roumania there is something to be done," and with her zeal, ardour, and unflagging energy, she not only found a great deal to be done, but, by means of ordered and methodical working, found time to do everything in the right way.

In the capital, her schools, societies, orphan asylums, and hospitals kept her busy during the winter months, but usually at the end of May the royal couple went to their country seat of Cotroceni, an ancient convent

situated in an immense park, which had been fitted up by Prince Charles for their summer residence.

Here the Princess was free to roam about in the vast forests, and to recall the hours of her childhood by following her favourite childhood's amusements, climbing the mountains with the fearlessness of the chamois, playing with ball or hoop on the springing grass, sitting at nightfall with her ladies at the foot of some limpid cascade, telling the fairy tales she had known and loved in youth, or listening with moistened eye and glowing cheek to the romantic legends whose richest imagery has for its home the wilds of the Carpathian or the Caucasus. Life for the Princess was one long summer day, and to add to the joy of these gracious months, her Highness anticipated the golden autumn which was to bring to her her harvest of love and life, and to afford new happiness to her royal spouse, and a new hope to the people and throne of Roumania.

On the evening of the 8th September, 1870, a salute of twenty-one guns announced that a daughter had been born to the princely couple. Several hours later, the Metropolitan of Bucharest arrived in great pomp, and, to quote Madame v. Stakelberg, "covered

the mother and child with images, according to the Greek rite; blessed them with holy water, and pronounced the usual words of ritual."

It would be unnecessary to state that this woman—so womanly in every sense of the word—experienced the realisation of her completest joy in the feeling of maternity, and we find her as usual recording in her diary the events of the day, and her own feelings as a wife and mother.

About this time Roumania was in a state of political agitation, virtually induced by the introduction of the Strousberg system of railways, considered by Prince Charles as necessary to any civilised country. His Highness was so greatly embarrassed to know what was the best thing for the country that at one time he thought seriously of abdicating, but the Roumanian nation was too fond of its ruler, and too thoroughly appreciated the advantage of being governed by so wise, moderate, yet firm a prince, not to stand firm in its support of the Government, and so the crisis was happily soon passed.

Princess Elisabeth was doubly occupied, not only with the care of the various asylums and societies she had founded, but with the health of the little

Princess Maria, which absorbed her every moment of freedom and of repose from the cares of State. At this time she was studying Roumanian, and had become such a mistress of its most intricate sense that, to quote the late Roumanian Homer, Mr. V. Alecsandri, "She speaks a better, purer Roumanian than nine-tenths of those born in the country."

The letters of Princess Elisabeth to her mother, the Princess of Wied, are not only a complete history of herself and of the royal family, but are likewise an admirable history of her adopted land, Roumania. The country, the scenery, the people, the peasants, are almost photographic in their accuracy.

At the opening of the new railway, Prince Charles and his consort took occasion to visit Jassy, the capital of Moldavia, and their trip was one triumph from first to last. Addresses were presented, and deputations of leading dignitaries met the royal party at all the important stations. The customary bread and salt were presented in token of friendship and welcome.

*Te Deums* and *Jubilates* were sung in every cathedral throughout the country. Princess Elisabeth at that time wrote the following to her mother: "It would be scarcely possible to imagine a greater enthusiasm

than is here manifested by the cries from thousands of throats, and from the mouths of a thousand cannon. In Jassy the time was taken up with audiences, visits to churches and schools, and flying trips to the cloisters situated here and there in the surrounding mountains, and so forth. The population, to a man, seem drunk with enthusiasm." And on her return she wrote again to her mother: "What can I tell you of the lovely countries through which we have travelled—eight little horses to our carriage, and shouting, whip-snapping postillions! From three to four hundred mounted peasants at full speed accompanied us with their flying white *mantels* of goatskin floating in the wind, and high caps made of white fur. What can I say to you of the fine, stalwart men of Moldavia, or how can I make you understand with what real pride I heard my husband say at every railway, and every road, and every bridge, 'That was done by me'! And then, to keep on going on farther and farther, like the chase of the wild huntsman! And now that we are back again, away from those thousands who applauded us, better than all is to hold in my arms, happy and rosy, one more beloved than all the thousands."

The same year the mother of Princess Elisabeth came to visit Bucharest, and held her first grandchild in her arms.

The health of the little Princess was such that it was not possible to pass the summer in Bucharest, and it was decided to take her where she could breathe mountain air—the only preventive against the fatal grip of fever, which sooner or later attacks every one in Roumania. The summer residence was chosen in the Carpathians, and thither the royal family repaired at the beginning of the hot season.

In the valley of Pranova, three thousand feet above the level of the sea, on the rocky and sterile Falsberg, stands the old cloister of Sinaïa. It had been founded by a Wallachian pilgrim, and named after the Mount Sinai of the Bible. It had served as asylum or resting-place for the caravans and travelling merchants, making their way over the mountains into Transylvania. Behind the cloister rises one of the highest peaks of the Carpathians, surrounded by mountains of lesser height, gloomy in appearance and cut out with all the fantastic caprices of mountainous nature. Madame v. Stakelberg, in her book, "*Aus Carmen Sylva's Leben*," thus describes the convent:—

"The wanderer approaching the mountain sees glimmering from afar the white walls of the cloister. The one-storeyed structure is of very modest dimensions, and surrounds a plain quadrangular courtyard, in the middle of which is the little church. The outer buildings are adorned with wooden arcades, and on the outer walls we still see old Byzantine frescoes. Thirty monks, true types of Oriental priestcraft, here enjoy in peaceful repose the benefits of their pious calling. Formerly the Prince shared with them their modest little rooms, but about this time, wishing to make his residence more commodious, he constructed a light cottage of fir-wood, which was added to the main body of the edifice. Were it not for the flag of Roumania floating over the great gateway, and the sentinels walking to and fro under the galleries of sculptured wood, one would expect to find within these walls the home of some artist, rather than the residence of a royal couple. We can scarcely form an idea of the uncomplaining modesty with which, year after year, the sovereigns endured the greatest inconveniences. For instance, the Princess in her toilette-room heard a clock ticking in the neighbouring cell of an old monk. The holy fathers took their

meals in the refectory, whilst the adjoining corridor was converted into a dining-room for the Prince and his wife. Twice in the week victuals and other necessaries were brought from the neighbouring capital, but these inconveniences seemed little worth mentioning, for in Sinaïa, as in Mon Repos, they enjoyed the forest, the air, and liberty—three principal life-giving elements to the princely pair."

It is higher in the valley, and in the shade of great trees, that the Prince built his shooting-box, and has surrounded it with gardens of exquisite beauty; this edifice, the Castel de Pelech, already described, is now become the favourite summer residence of the Court, and yearly from April until November, the sovereigns, with their retinue and guests, pass there the happiest hours of their lives.

## CHAPTER IX.

WE have followed the Princess from her ancestral home on the banks of the Rhine, to her royal demesne on the banks of the Danube ; we have followed her career in art and ethics, her social, literary, and artistic labours to that perfect result which, while the object of the many, has been the reward but of the few ; we have assisted at her triumphs as poet, author, sovereign, and mother ; we now arrive at that sad epoch when, with the dropping of the sun behind the clear orient, the brightest and most glorious day found its end, at the period when her heart was shattered, her shrine vacant, her idol destroyed, and her life become the benumbed existence of one who survives the loss of a dear, perhaps the dearest, object it held upon earth.

With that fatal sixth sense so sure an element in a superfine nature, the Queen felt that her happiness was too great to last. Surrounded with every

blessing that it had pleased the Almighty to bestow, adored by king, husband, and subjects, a second sun to her dear Sun-child, the little Princess Maria, her heart overflowed its boundaries to that fatal frontier which separates joy and sorrow, everything from nothing; her Highness felt all the secret pangs of a constant presentiment of forthcoming ill. It would seem as if she were endowed with second-sight, that the ribbons of destiny were hovering in the air, around, above, below her, and that she were breathing misfortune to come. As we stop in a summer garden and feel the airy cobweb for a moment bind our lips, stray across brow and cheek, so was the atmosphere of happiness choked by the passing breath of presentiment and foreboding.

She wrote to her mother and said: "My life is too perfect, too beautiful. Can it last, can it last?" —words often spoken and penned by enthusiasts, happily not so soon as in this case to become auguries of misfortune and despair.

Fate may be alone in direness of design, but it would seem that as soon as misfortune is in the air, we mortals are the first to aid pitiless destiny, to open the door to disaster, to make way for calamity,



and to personally invite destruction to ourselves from and on every side. This is especially the prerogative of the super-sensitive, who, if at times they enjoy more, at others as certainly suffer more; and the Queen, to whom so much had been given, was no stranger to this rule. The law of human compensation is that of a diviner Mede or Persian; for all one possesses beyond the gifts of the ordinary mortal, one must pay the inevitable penalty. Nature is the greatest of usurers: her exaction for an ounce of talent is the pound of non-appreciation; for an ounce of joy the pound of misery; for the golden measure of plenty the heart's dearth from complete starvation; and with the rigorous justice of her finely balanced nature, the Queen knew but too well that she must also pay her tribute for an over-stacked granary of blessings. It is strange that happiness preyed upon her exalted mind as misery preys upon a mind less exalted; that from the moment the joys of motherhood crowned the temple of her desires, the cloud of apprehension already darkened the horizon of a sphere too radiant not to throw a shadow from such a sun of brightness.

So great was the joy of the people on the occasion

of the birth of the Princess Maria that, to quote the Baroness von Stakelberg—"Her little Highness was the mightiest person in all Roumania."

The first enthusiasm and delight of motherhood calmed, the looking for a newer light in baby eyes, the interpreting of baby smiles, the noting a wrinkle here, an expression there, the mastering of the complete looks and language of babyhood accomplished, her Highness set about a curious and interesting work.

She discovered that there were no children's fairy stories or books for children in the Roumanian language, and determined to supply this national want. Herself a magnificent Roumanian scholar, she began to write a series of fairy tales and tales for the young, which soon became folklore, and which the national poets—Alecsandri at their head—declare to be marvels of invention, sweetness, perfection, and taste.

Little Maria thus began her education at her mother's knee, and the sovereign's labour of love was speedily imitated by all young mothers; not that of writing, but of teaching very youthful minds, neither the grotesque, fabulous, nor terrible, but simple,

innocent tales, as pure as harmless, and as salutary as ingenious. Little peasant-children longed to be taught as was the little girl at the castle, all the mothers in Roumania blessed the sovereign, and all the youth began to look upon her as the good fairy of one of her own legends.

We will not follow the life of her Highness during all her studies, but will take it up at the period of her travels: notably a journey to Jassy and Moldavia with the Prince, and a trip through Italy and the Tyrol. We quote from Madame von Stakelberg the following :—

“The ensuing March, in consequence of ill health and fever, unaccompanied by husband or child, the Queen was obliged to go to Italy for change of air. In May her Highness returned home, strong and well, and the Prince went to meet her in the *Donau*, one of the Royal steamships plying the famous river of that name.”

The Queen wrote : “That was a romantic meeting. I in the *Stephan*, Karl in the *Romania*, all bedecked and beflagged. We glided swiftly towards each other in the brilliant sunshine, each of us standing on the deck, and straining our eyes in search of the longed-

for ship. I did not see my child until two days later in Comana. How charming she had grown! You can form no conception of the exquisite tenderness and grace of the dear little creature. Her training will be an easy matter, for she is so vexed with herself when she says or does anything stupid that one is constantly obliged to comfort her. . . . Directly one makes an appeal to her heart, every trace of obstinacy and ill-will disappears. She is such a patient, intelligent child. There is such depth and penetration in her blue eyes, one feels inclined to wonder what sort of thoughts dwell behind the arched brows and brilliant orbs. . . . I think that so long as the world endures, a mother's love and a mother's happiness will be much the same, and will be compensation for all the cares and troubles of this life. . . . But the joys of this earth must be very tenderly handled. They are fragile."

The household of the Princess is a veritable garden of juvenile bloom. She loved to surround herself with the young—her ladies-in-waiting and maids-of-honour were most of them in their teens, and all—to quote the divine poet—wore on their bosoms the rose of youth. It is a pretty sight to see the Royal

poetess surrounded by her children, here the daughter of a great writer, here the daughter of a celebrated artist, here the daughter of a famous general; all chosen from among her subjects with that innate delicacy and tact possessed by her Highness, who loves to surround her person by those human flowers culled in the garden of courage, genius, and talent.

I have already described an evening at the palace, and only add here a few words anent the little heiress from Madame von Stakelberg's "*Aus Carmen Sylva's Leben.*" She says:—

"In this delightful environment the little Princess Maria bids fair to grow up as charming as her gifted mother, and to develop, like her, an essentially earnest and thoughtful nature. She was, like the heroine of Carmen Sylva's legend, a child of the sun, endowed with every grace and every charm. Love and happiness were her companions and playmates. In those days the earth was filled with joy and blessedness, with a glory and beauty that no pen could fitly describe, and no painter adequately realise. Life was a perpetual May, and the august mother looked from afar with unbounded and heartfelt joy at her

daughter's joyous frolic, and blessed the earth whereon her child was so gay and light of heart."

We will now pass rapidly over the saddest period of the Queen's life. The health of the little Princess Maria, always very delicate, began to cause her mother constant care and watching, and at the same time her happy, light-hearted disposition often deceived even her mother. Children usually complain, not because they are children, but because infancy is a transparent stream that reflects every passing shadow of light and shade upon its surface. Little Maria had been known to suffer silently for a whole day, and only by the merest chance to discover either to her parents or attendants that she felt indisposed. It would seem that she had imbibed the breath of stoicism with her good nurse's milk—that savage endurance which takes the red man smiling to the stake, and the Hindoo widow calm and majestic to her own funeral pile. Hence it was necessary to surround the little girl with an almost invisible guard, lest she herself should take alarm, and grow nervous from the consciousness of being so constantly attended and watched.

I often look at the little street waifs, rolling

about in sand, revelling in dirt and liberty, and think that if the rich could only give to their own youth the mud-pies, soiled pinafores, and dirty faces of the poor, healthier and more beautiful human flowers would spring from this human engrais. But there is a destiny for rich and poor. In spite of all the watching and care and solicitude that surrounded it, the royal bud never ripened to bloom, and the royal cradle was emptied of the fair child whose coming had gladdened, not so much the sovereign's as the mother's heart.

In the summer of 1873, Princess Elisabeth travelled with her little daughter, and, for the first time since her marriage, returned to the home of her youth. We can imagine with what joy the Princess looked upon her ancestral home, back to the hills of the Westerwald, where emerald festoons surround Castle Neue Wied, with its chain of undulating green : back to the Rhine, stretching as of old into the distant horizon, to the towers of Coblenz and the ruins of Braunsberg and Segendorf.

It was in this home of her youth, in this smiling and fertile country, that the young Princess showed to little Maria all the scenes and objects she had known

and loved in her own childhood. The fond mother listened to her darling's childish fancies, to her lisping voice, as she communed with flowers and birds and fragrant winds. One glorious afternoon she sprang from her mother's side and ran in and out of the old trees—as her mother remembered to have done, and as her brother, the poor little Prince Otto, had so often wished he could do. The Princess watched her child fondly, and was not a little curious to know to what the infant was giving chase with such unflagging energy. She called, “Maria, Maria, come hither!” and when the child but too reluctantly came back to her side, she gave the following reply: “Mamma, I was playing with the sunshine and trying to catch it, but it always slipped through my fingers.”

Weeks were spent in the old home. Not only was the mother's health immensely benefited by the change, but the little girl grew as strong and lithe as one of the young pines in the old forest. Her merriment was infectious, her laugh contagious, and often all the woods seemed vocal with the sweetness of her clear, young, trilling voice. She was allowed to wander at will; she made friends with the old lodge-keeper, who had often held her own mother in his

arms as a child ; she knew the name of every servant on the estate, and where the old gardener would be tending some special flower, a child's voice would break on his reverie, a child's blue eyes be bent on him with all a child's wise infantine gravity, and a tangle of golden hair, like fillets of golden cobweb, would suddenly brush across the withered face.

Then the flower would be forgotten—the gardener's flower—and this latest blossom born to the House of Wied would engross all the old man's attention and interest. And what parleyings there were amongst tenants, cottagers, peasants, and retainers—what discussions in town, and village, and farmhouse, and cottage : the child was the image of this one or that or the other member of her royal family. There were the usual differences of opinion as to family resemblances, but all agreed as to her marvellous sweetness of disposition, her simplicity and gaiety, and gave her, by common accord, her mother's pet name of Sun-child. Then there were the usual little jealousies between mother and mother, for grandmamma could not bear her grandchild out of her sight—grandmothers never can—and mamma naturally could not

endure to leave her child with anyone, even her own beloved parent. So the hours and days and weeks ran on; the Princess had shown her wonderful baby to all her old school-friends; its little face was familiar to everyone in the village, and every mother in the place talked about this child as if it were her own special invention and production. At last the final leave-taking came. Good-bye was said to the dear Princess-mother, to *Mon Répos*, lying so peaceful against the green hillside, and to the emerald heights, above whose festoons of living green little Maria intently watched the sun as it leaped in a great golden ball towards the western horizon.

The journey home passed without other incident than the strange reiteration of the little child: “I want to get back to Bucharest!” In vain did her mother question her as to her stay at *Neue Weid*. She admitted that she had been very happy there, but insisted that she wanted to get back to Roumania. It could not have been the child’s love for pomp and State ceremony—she was surrounded with all that at *Mon Répos*. Still perhaps the unique position she had occupied at the Court of Bucharest might have left some lingering idea in her mind that she was a more

important personage in Roumania than at Neue Wied; or was it merely the child longing, with all a child's longing, to see again the familiar faces which represented all her world, and the familiar surroundings which represented all her life? When they reached Vienna, a group of Roumanian students came to greet the sovereign and the little Princess, which latter informed them confidentially, in their own dialect: "I am going home to Bucharest with eight horses."

Like the sun-god in his chariot reining in the steeds of dawn, so this child was flashing towards the golden orient—towards the morning which was to break into eternal day in the roseate, flushing east. When she saw the old cloister of Sinaïa, her little heart danced with glee, and she immediately began to plan promenades in the forest, spoke of the waters of the Pelech and of the old familiar beauties as of old familiar friends.

Diphtheria and typhus having made their appearance at the capital, it was decided that the Court should remain for some time in residence at Sinaïa.

In February, 1874, diphtheria and scarlet fever

ravaged the Moldavian, Wallachian, and Roumanian provinces. The winter had been unusually severe, and it would seem that fever and malignant disease were swept upwards on every breath that blew over Caucasus and Carpathian. The Princess wrote in her diary : “Diphtheria and scarlet fever are raging here in Bucharest ; children are dying by thousands. When we mothers meet, the very first question we ask is, ‘Are your children well?’”

In the latter part of Lent the little Princess had a slight attack of diphtheria, which, after the usual treatment, disappeared. On Palm Sunday, the 5th April, she was attacked with scarlet fever, and developed alarming symptoms, attended by a return of diphtheria. The Princess watched by her child day and night. She neither ate, drank, nor slept. Her hands administered to all the childish wants. Her hands prepared bandage and poultice and food—anything to tempt the sick child’s appetite. Her hands prepared the cooling drinks which for the most part remained untouched in the little silver mug, placed on a table by the child’s bed. In the height of fever Maria’s bright eyes fell upon the cup, and she said : “I want to go back to Sinaïa and drink from

the cascade of the Pelech.” Then the mother’s heart was torn. She saw arise before her—not the cloister of Sinaia and the torrent of the Pelech, with priests and peasants coming and going in the valleys—but the towers of Neue Wied—of Mon Répos, tipped by the early sunrise, the bubbling waters of the river Wied, silvered with the sheen of early moon, and the longing eyes of a poor sick child trying to catch a last glimpse of the golden Westerwald heights: and she murmured to herself, as she had written to her mother: “There is a law of recompense. I was too happy. Something had to be taken away to counterbalance the overflowing measure of my great joy.”

It was the morning of Holy Thursday, and already the cathedral bells were sending out warning notes for fasting and prayer. Bucharest was alive, pious folk were seen wending their way to their morning orisons, and crowds of sympathetic souls of every rank were mingling with the names of their own loved ones that of the little Sun-child whose darkened chamber cast a shadow on the palace wall. The air was soft and balmy, unusual at that season, and although mountains of snow lay beyond on the Car-

pathians, and fields of snow lay white in the ravines and broad valleys, yet the light of early morning flushed the pale face of the hills, and under the sod the buds of waiting spring were bursting with their perennial leaven. The snow-birds—perhaps those very same that the Princess used to tend on the old ledges of Mon Répos—were already chirping on branch and window-sill. Five o'clock struck from a neighbouring church. Without the palace was heard the hum of insects, the ring of steps on the wintry pavement, and the snapping of some dry branch in a wintry tree; and the April wind coming up slowly, stealthily, as a messenger comes who bears news of unwelcome import; within, the sick child, the hushed chamber, anxious attendants, and the anguished watching mother.

Little Maria lay back in the arms of her tender nurse, when she suddenly asked for a drink, which she took with a smile. Did she think she was drinking the clear waters of the Pelech, in that valley where she had so often chased the sun and its rays of gold? The mother, kneeling at her feet, holding the child's hands with a loving, gentle clasp, looked into the eyes of her dear

one, and she too went back in thought to happier days.

There was a slight quivering, the little head drooped forward, and the Princess arose the poorest woman in all her dominions. The little Sun-child had gone to meet an eternal aurora.

## CHAPTER X.

DURING the Russo-Turkish campaign of 1877 Roumania, for the first time in many years, found herself called upon to furnish a large standing army. A corps of forty thousand beyond the usual militia and regular service was gathered from every part of the Moldavian and Wallachian provinces. The enthusiasm for the Russian alliance was so great that noblemen left their castles, farmers their fields, and peasants, who scarcely knew what firearms were, declared themselves proud to fight for their country.

It was then that her Majesty, as Princess of Roumania, showed of what noble stuff women are sometimes made. History has rarely or never given an example of greater self-sacrifice, nobler courage, or purer devotion than was evinced by the Princess Elisabeth on this noteworthy occasion. It is natural that one in her position should receive the greatest acknowledgment for even the slightest services, but

it is difficult to exaggerate the womanly perfections she displayed at this time, and it would seem as if ten centuries of ancestral excellencies had all combined their virtues in this latest and most worthy descendant. The Queen's conduct at this memorable epoch showed her to be the worthy successor of that Prince Victor of Wied whose touching, admirable, and patriotic life has been the theme of Ernst Moritz Arndt, whose most stirring national poems it will not be irrelevant here to recall.

Prince Victor's life was a dream of ambition, an example of glorious achievements.\* At the age of eighteen he buckled on his sword in the defence of his country ; he followed the entire Spanish campaign under Napoleon ; and at the age of six-and-twenty, fell on the field of battle, revered by his parents, regretted by his country, and a lasting honour to that flag whose honour he had so valiantly upheld.

When the garrisons were preparing for battle, when the sound of pipe and drum rang throughout

\* Prince Victor's life and letters were so remarkable that they were not only made the subject of poetry by the great poet Arndt, but a collection of his correspondence was made, and, with a history of himself and his exploits, formed one of the choicest volumes of this celebrated writer.

Roumania, her Highness remembered the days of her youth, when she sat on the knee of the poet Arndt, and listened to his tales of her ancestor, the hero Prince, and these lines rang through her memory :—

“ Von hohen Bergen fliesset  
Das Flüsschen Wied zum Rhein,  
An dessen Ufern spriesset  
Ein Fürstenhaus so fein.  
Aus altem Heldenstamme  
Mit Schlechtem nie in Kauf,  
Drum schlägt auch edle Flamme  
Aus Stamm und Würzeln auf.”

The Princess organised a system of ambulances, while she herself, apparelled in the costume of a sister of charity, made her way unattended through the city of Bucharest. Nothing daunted her invincible courage, and scenes that drew tears from the stoutest hearts failed outwardly to affect her heroic fortitude. Never of the strongest health, her Highness on this occasion seemed made of iron ; but the courage of woman rises with her needs, and it would appear that the creature destined to bring heroes into the world is by nature endowed with that peculiar resistance denied to man.

She watched by the sick and dying, she dressed

wounds and nursed fever-stricken patients whose breath alone seemed a fatal contagion, but God walked abroad with this noble lady. Her invincibility, her strength, and her smile of pity appeared but the visible reflection of a divine and more omnipotent spirit. Her influence was most felt in attending the wounded, and those for whom amputation was considered necessary.

The Roumanian, in every walk of life, has that fierce savageness and primitive pride which abhors the idea of doctors and surgeons, and looks upon the loss of one of his limbs, not only as a disgrace, but as a greater calamity than loss of life itself. He has never seen other than mendicants and highway beggars crippled or disabled, and his idea is that were he to suffer the loss of any of his members, he would no longer be respected, but would be immediately despised, classed amongst those miserable and abandoned outcasts.

The greatest difficulty the Princess had to fight against was this rooted mania against disfigurement. Many soldiers, whose lives could have been saved, preferred death to amputation, and so died. The sovereign, however, was unfailing in her perse-

verance. She thought if she could get one to yield to her prayers others would be sure to follow.

One day walking in the hospital ward, she saw an old soldier suffering from a compound fracture of the leg, which threatened gangrene. Amputation would certainly save his life, but, as is well known, no soldier is ever operated upon except after his own consent; consequently, the resident surgeon, unable to obtain the desired authority, sorrowfully, even complainingly, gave up insisting. Her Highness, however, who had overheard the discussion, went to the bedside and joined her prayers to those of the doctor. In vain the soldier reiterated that he should be taken up for a mendicant like the wretched outcasts of the Carpathians.

"I am not a beggar," he said proudly; "I'll lose my life, but not my honour."

"'Tis true," said the Princess, "you are not a beggar, but I am," and she threw herself on her knees at the bedside. "I have never prayed but to God," and taking his hand, she added, "but I now supplicate you to listen to His wish and mine. Let your leg be taken off, and spare your life to your family, to your country, and to me, and——"

"And if I consent, *mia doamna*, what then?"

"What then!" she said joyfully, rising and seizing his hand again, "why, I shall give you the most beautiful cork leg that can be made in Europe; it shall work with springs, and when the war is over, you shall come and dance at the palace with your sons."

"I consent," he said softly, "but you must hold my hand during the operation."

It is almost unnecessary to state that the Princess was only too happy to be the means of saving a soldier's life. After this the surgeons met with no more resistance in the matter of amputation.

Stories of the sovereign's tenderness, heroism, and affection for those who had done battle for the country went the rounds from camp to camp, and spread to the most distant hut in the Carpathians. As every boy in America is promised if he learns to read he may some day confidently hope to become President of the United States, so every wounded soldier who submitted to the operation of amputation was promised the privilege of a visit to, and a dance in, the royal castle. It is an open question whether many who have gone through the old soldier's experience for a smile, a tear, a hand-

clasp of this gracious lady, would not have submitted to the sawing off of both legs, and for such recompense gone cripples to the remainder of their days.

With the end of the war came the triumph of Roumania. She was declared a kingdom by the powers, and on the 22nd May, 1881, Prince Charles of Hohenzollern and Roumania became Charles I. of Roumania. The King, accompanied by the Queen and her brother, the heir presumptive, Leopold of Hohenzollern, signed the solemn coronation act, which legally made a kingdom of Roumania.

We extract the following from the “*Cours Princiers d’Europe.*”

“Young, and full of force, the King was there, standing decorated with all the marks of a recent glorious past, retaining all the calm and gravity which habitually distinguished him ; to the left were his brother’s sons, Princes Ferdinand and Charles ; to his right, Queen Elisabeth, beaming with beauty, and breathing majesty from every movement ; beside her sat the hereditary prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, wearing, like his brother, the Roumanian uniform.”

The lips of the Queen, around which ordinarily

plays so amiable a smile, seemed compressed and drawn together to repress a sob, which every moment threatened to escape her. . . This expression of sadness overspread her face only to embellish it. She held herself upright, showing her royal stature to advantage. Slender and tall, she stood with her eyes fixed upon the clergyman, who, at the foot of the estrade, was reading the coronation service. Her marvellous hair fell in soft curls from beneath the diadem which crowned her royal brows, and waved back in masses on the shapely neck, framed in a Medici collar, embroidered in gold and pearls; the long white satin train was lined with dark red, and bordered with ermine; a fan of superb ostrich feathers hung from her chatelaine; the rose-coloured ribbon of the order of Catherine II. depended from shoulder to waist, and to the left, conspicuous amongst the jewels of her bodice, was the star of the Roumanian order of literary merit, the *Ben i meriti*, coveted by the few celebrated in arts, sciences, and letters.

This was certainly a gala day for Bucharest; the crowds were immense, the population decked out in the richest of national costumes, and everywhere the sovereigns were greeted with indescribable loyalty

and enthusiasm. Not alone Queen Elisabeth, beloved and idolised by the people, but her Royal Consort, the soldier-king, Carol, were recipients of such enthusiasm and applause as greeted the Cæsars of old after state triumphs, and victories became individual. Many a soldier, landsman, and peasant, while gazing on the fair woman, bearing with such regal grace the purple of her high rank, recalled her as the pale sister of Mercy: dressed in the uniform of the Sisters of the Red Cross; bearing the universal badge of humility, fidelity, and charity; following the ambulance with its freight of agonised humanity, or making the rounds of the hospital ward with the other sick nurses; bathing the heated forehead, cooling the parched lips, or composing the stiffened limbs of those heroes who had fought for their king and queen and country. Not one soldier heart in all the realm but beat more proudly at sight of the brave young prince, whose superb feats of arms over the hardest of the Mussulman foe had so proudly won for him the traditional steel crown of Dacia and the Dacian kings. In the slender, noble-looking young monarch standing before them, vested with all the insignia and pomp of his high station, they saw the

hero of the Grivitzá redoubt : foremost in generalship, foremost in strategy, and foremost in battle ; enduring every hardship which the soldier endured, and gaining such victories as soldiers alone know how to appreciate.

## CHAPTER XI.

PERFECTION in any art, and certainly in that of literature, has never been attained by the many, and is scarcely the portion of the few. Her Majesty, however, possesses one of the chief distinguishing attributes which, according to Edgar Allan Poe, should promise not only success, but successful artistic labour. She has originality, the quality above-named, in a very marked degree, chiefly noticeable in the lyrics, "The Three Friends," "The Sun-Child," and "The Mother" (the latter, although original in idea, recalls a well-known English lyric), and in the prose of "Idle Ramblings," notably "In Fetters," "The Mother-in-Law," and "The Story of a Child," the latter in collaboration with the highly gifted writer, Madame Kremnitz. "In Fetters" is certainly one of the very remarkable realistic novelettes of modern literature. It is characterised by boldness of thought, simplicity of style, and originality of idea,

qualities which when analysed assume the simplest forms of everyday comprehension. We can well understand "In Fetters" to be the work of a master-mind, and yet cannot understand how it is that other master-minds should never have treated in a similar manner, so feeling, so true, so thoroughly realistic a subject.

"In Fetters" is a purely imaginative work in one way, a purely realistic one in another; a woman writing the autobiography of a man must necessarily write in the imaginative sense, but the Queen, like most of the highest gifted writers, realises that perhaps, after all, the greatest difference between man and woman is physical rather than moral. Her Majesty knows but too well that if she wish to describe a man's real love she has but to call to mind a woman's real love ; if she wish to describe a man's pure joy she has but to describe a woman's pure joy ; if to describe a man's deepest despair, she has but to picture a woman's deepest despair. Moral heights and depths have no sexual difference, and the sentiment in man or woman which idealises before it peoples the world is not the exclusive property of one individual, neither can it be distinctly modified or

distinctly described by any one individual. The Queen, of course, realises this, but her enormous cleverness consists not alone in picturing man as he is, but in the depiction of man, his one distinct essence, his very second self—habit. Habit, man's second nature, understood by every other man, but never understood by any woman, for alas ! it can never be understood by woman. Usually what a woman takes for love is passion, what she takes for passion is habit, what she takes for affection, friendship, and what she takes for habit, indifference.

"In Fetters" is an astonishing study of one woman's strength, one woman's frailty, and one man's—second self—selfishness. Nora, Lavinia, and Ewald are as distinct and thoroughly natural personages as any conceived by Balzac or Dickens. From the first they are clear-cut and polished like the diamond which, from a vague original carbon, under the cutters' happiest chisel grew the Kohinoor.

The Queen has drawn her characters with a directness, naturalness, force, and simplicity beyond all praise. Under these powerful lenses, even the man's egotism shines forth with such unaffected artlessness that one is forced to ask—did Carmen Sylva write

this innocently or with the fullest conviction of what she was doing? Did she realise in one sense, in many senses, how odious her hero really is, and yet at the same time, to properly balance his character, real or imagined, how impossible it would have been to the artistic soul to have made him out other than what he has legitimately become? If she wrote in the first sense, innocently, we must admit very exceptional natural powers; if in the second, not alone the gifts, but added to these a very high order of art. Between creation and execution lies the world of unwritten failures. Here, whoever runs may read. I refrain from further judgment, and content myself with according a very just praise to the writer, praise which thorough conscientious work must demand the world over from everyone who sympathises with or appreciates the great beauty of high literary invention, the enormous difficulty of perfect literary execution.

“The Mother-in-Law” and “In Fetters” must speak for themselves in detail, but the same careful style and workmanship remarked above characterise one as the other; the same originality of thought, force, and limpidity of utterance lend to each a charm peculiarly its own, a charm which one must

recognise and accord in a very eminent degree to the pen of Carmen Sylva.

I may note in passing that the "Mother-in-Law" is an extremely beautiful picture of life in Roumania, the description of scenes in the capital and provinces, the people, costumes, habitations, light and colour, even of an oriental snow-storm, not red, but white, an it please you, being marvels of exactitude, lucidity, and beauty. The Queen has caught the old Greek idea of action, that is to say, movement, motion in description. For instance, she says, the peasants bestrode their horses as if they were *part of the animals themselves*. By way of exact expression, nothing could be happier. Innumerable similar passages occur, bespeaking her Majesty's mastery of word-painting, that rock whereon the finest talents have been, and are destined to be, fatally wrecked.

What astonishes and delights, however, in the writings of Carmen Sylva are the lasting pictures painted with seemingly evanescent colours. The Queen is a master of style. She is essentially a poet, but her prose would challenge the hardiest of criticism. It is a very beautiful and pure German, so improved by knowledge of foreign authors that while

it remains distinctly and purely a native talent, it is robbed of the heaviness and pretentiousness so occasional to the learned German writer.

Her Majesty has one fault in her prose, however, which is serious, and that is a certain curtness of phrasing; a certain leaving too much to the imagination of her listeners, seriously inconsistent with lucidity and simplicity of style, and oftentimes out of place with the sentiment, the character of her most studied creations.

Brevity may be the soul of wit, but between being brief and being intelligible there is a vast and dangerous gulf.

In his magnificent Barrett-Browning study, with reference to this same fault—obscurity of expression in writers—Edgar Poe speaks particularly and to grand purpose. He says:—

. . . “It is the nature of thought in general, as it is the nature of some ores in particular, to be richest when most superficial, and we do mean to say, secondly, that in nineteen cases out of twenty, the reader will suffer the most valuable ore to remain unmined to all eternity, before he will be put to the trouble of digging for it one inch: and we do mean

to assert, thirdly, that no reader is to be condemned for *not* putting himself to the trouble of digging even the one inch, for no writer has the right to impose any such necessity upon him. *What is worth thinking is distinctly thought, what is distinctly thought can and should be distinctly expressed or should not be expressed at all.*\* The language is strong, but surely not too strong; and when we see a person of the very highest mental organisation and mental endowment not doing fullest justice to her exceptional gifts, we are reminded of the poet's dictum, which we have quoted above.

It is likewise true the beautiful picture always remains the picture, but if it is to be framed, it should be framed in a worthy manner, or it should not be framed at all.

The above seems to me Carmen Sylva's most striking fault—her virtues may speak for themselves.

The art of writing is not to leave but to lend to the imagination: not alone to see and feel all the author sees and feels, but at the same time to have a new train of ideas or thoughts awakened, as it were,

\* The italics are the author's.

by one chance idea or thought. That is one reason why the classics are a perennial fount. We read and re-read the thing we thought yesterday to know in its minutest sense, and to-day we discover a newer sense which appeals to us with a newer charm. The blue sea opens, and Aphrodite rises as she rose long ago from the blue and limpid wave. We may gaze and gaze; she is still there, do not be afraid she will disappear. It is true she only shows herself to the faithful, but all goddesses are alike in this. Venus only appeared to *Æneas*, the goddess-born, when he called upon her with faith. Spirits of light, like spirits of darkness, are but visible to those who see with the mind, and if we wish immortality, we must invoke the goddess from afar, warm the muse, not at mortal, but immortal fires. She will ever return, ever part the blackest wave, ever illumine the blackest expanse, but we must make the appeal. The mind requires to be treated with respect, with ceremony; without the asking treasures will not be hurled at one's head; but call with conviction, as children hang up their stockings on Christmas Eve, and in the night a beautiful fairy will come laden with Christmas gifts; the morrow will dawn with a

roseate light in the flushing east, and the goddess-born will go forth to victory radiant with the panoply of the chosen, the faith which prepares for victory, and the invincible armour which predestines lasting triumphs.

The world will fall down before what it worshipped yesterday, and will be ever ready to adore to-morrow what it adored to-day. There will be always something to say, because the greatest have left something unsaid. One might think that Homer had said all, but Virgil said more ; Dante even more, and Shakespeare—even Shakespeare—ah, that is a revered name to write—even Shakespeare has not pronounced the *Ωμεγά* of literature. As long as men and women are born into the world, the sun shines and flowers bloom, so long will genius create, and the force of its light pervade the earth anew with radiance ; so long will rich thoughts and high intellectual purpose perfume existence, men and women will read and write, and humanity will give back the perpetual watchword that may once or twice be challenged at the lines of human purpose, but in the end will ever be understood by humanity's chosen and faithful sentinels.

With regard both to the poetical and prose

works of Carmen Sylva, the highest compliment we can pay them is to insert in this memoir fair samples and free translations from the German. But the poetry, likewise from the German, even of the two ballads—"Die Lerche," and "Perlenreihen"—wherein we had been helped to the sense through the verbal translation of the great folk-poet Alecsandri—we feel constrained to omit: the sudden death of the bard having prevented our submittal to his late Excellency of either the French or English versions. In justice to the Queen we defer publication of all the poetical translations until they shall have been more thoroughly and completely revised.

Several years have elapsed since Carmen Sylva published "Rumänische Dichtungen, with Notes by Mita Kremnitz"—the latter a very charming writer, and also the collaboratrice and friend of her Majesty. The book comprises German adaptations from the Roumanian poets: V. Alecsandri, born 1821, Poet Laureate of Roumania and late Roumanian Minister in Paris; Bolintenianu, (1821-1872); Caudiano Popescu, born 1842; Cretzanu, born 1835; Eminescu, born 1850; Konaki (1785-1850); Negrucci, born 1842; Serbanescu, born 1839, and Torceanu, born 1856.

The selections made for reproduction were from

poems by the Poet Laureate, Alecsandri, although eminently worthy to be distinguished before those of his brother poets, not chosen through other cause than the very simple one that I am well acquainted with the works of his Excellency V. Alecsandri, but did not feel myself competent to render full justice to other lyrics by native authors. Moreover, many of the standard works of Roumanian poets, notably some by the Laureate himself, have been so admirably rendered into English song by the gifted singer, William Beatty Kingston, that the loss will be but the nominal one of shutting the cover of one book to open the cover of another.

The success of the Queen's volume of poems, published by Strauss, of Bonn, has been so great, that a fourth edition is exhausted, and a fifth is now in press, and her Majesty—Carmen Sylva—with wise thoughtfulness, gives all the products of her writings, which are not inconsiderable, to the poor.

It must be someone of extraordinary energy who can accomplish what her Majesty has achieved; only one of the most unflinching perseverance could combine such incessant social, literary, and charitable labours. Nothing is neglected. The Queen is the first person in the house to rise; the first rosy light,

flushing the Carpathian Hills, floods her fair hair, carved table, and white hands flashing over the white manuscripts : and at night, when the fairy lamps are extinguished in the valley, and the sentinel on guard looks at the last stars fading from the midnight heavens, one light is seen to throw its eloquent beam around, above, and below. It comes from the royal *sanctum*, where the unwearied author is pouring the midnight oil for her poor ; writing story after story and tale after tale ; drawing from the inexhaustible fount which is nourished by wisdom, and goodness, and habit.

Amongst her Majesty's other best known works are the following :

“Stürme,” “Jehovah.” A series entitled “Aus Carmen Sylva's Königreich,” and consisting of two parts : Part I, “Pelechmärchen,” and Part II, “Durch die Jahrhunderte.”

“Durch die Jahrhunderte” is a collection of stories dealing with Roumania and Roumanian legend—beginning with a tale founded on one of her Majesty's favourite themes—ancient Dacia—and introducing the good and great Trajan, whose name and fortunes are always remembered by the people of Roumania.

Here the Queen's historical enthusiasm, fine fancy, and wide culture in Roumanian folk-lore are displayed in all their richest variety. The courage, chivalry, and valour of those bygone days are put away—as a woman puts away her first love-letter—in the lavender of her dearest remembrances. It is not too much to say that the studies : “Decebals-Tochter,” “Dragomira,” “Die Schlangeninsel,” “Mioritza,” “Doncila,” “Pietrele Doamne,” and “Bogdan”—the four latter taken from Volksballaden—with several others completing the volume, reflect the highest credit on the Queen's literary talent, taste, and style; and a perusal will well repay the ardent amateur of ancient and typical national studies. These historical tales are written with such brevity and vivacity, and so partake of the character of the country they describe, that it is difficult to realize that the graceful historian is speaking of centuries, and not days, ago. It is very curious to remark how the leading characteristics of the Dacian race remain unchanged, as in its eventful past. The men, women, peasants, nobles, children, speak, act, and move in the streets of Bucharest to-day as they did when gallant commanders gave the flower of Dacia to swell great Trajan's

armies ; when the giant trees of the Carpathians were but tender shoots in a fertile soil, and exiled Ovid took his tuneful lyre to the shades of the Euxine.

The above-named work—"Durch die Jahrhunderte" bears the following simple dédication :—

"Unserm geliebten und verehrten Dichter

VASILI ALECSANDRI

dem unermüdlichen Sammler rumänischer Volkspoesie, gewidmet, von

CARMEN SYLVA."

Besides the above-named works, one of her Majesty's latest and greatest successes is "Les Pensées d'une Reine," a volume of aphorisms, maxims, etc., which had the honour of receiving one of the prizes of the French Academy, bestowed by the immortal forty, whose favourable edict must gladden the heart of any woman, whether queen or otherwise.

The Queen has also written in conjunction with Madame Kremnitz: "Ans Zwei Welten," "Astra," "Feldpont," "Rache, und andere Novellen," and an historical tragedy, "Anna Boleyn." The Queen has

also made a translation of Pierre Loti's celebrated novel, "Les Pécheurs d'Island," which has already attained a second edition, and reflects the very highest credit on its royal translator.

Her Majesty's hospitality is proverbial, as is also that of her royal husband, and there are few personages in Europe, celebrated in art, literature, or science, who have not enjoyed the distinction of being invited to the royal demesne. The gates are opened wide; many have spent days and weeks, most welcome guests, in this noble retreat. It was on such an occasion that the Queen received M. Pierre Loti, and herself suggested the translation of his celebrated work. Her Majesty is enthusiastically devoted to French literature, ancient and modern, and is a veritable bibliophile in her knowledge of, affection and solicitude for, French men of letters. She has also written some charming verses in French—notably an impromptu in response to an invitation written in old Provençal, and sent her by an association of poets and authors, asking her to visit the land of the Troubadours. The King and Queen were then spending some time at Sestri Ponente, and her Majesty, with admirable promptness, indited the

following—too clever and charming not to be reproduced here.

*Réponse de S.M. la Reine Elisabeth de Roumanie au capiscol M. J. B. Gant, pour les Félibres de Lar.*

De gracieux noms suis appelée  
Venir ne puis,  
Par tems et devoir enchaînée  
Oiseau ne suis.

Si, comme la pensée moult radieuse,  
Ailée j'étais,  
A votre source mystérieuse  
Je renaîtrais.

Je baignerais dans l'harmonie  
De la chanson,  
Cherchant des froideurs de la vie  
La guérison.

Au grand soleil qui vous immonde  
De son amour,  
Oyez-je volerais une onde,  
Beau troubadour.

Je cueillerais de vos pensées  
La fraîche fleur,  
Vos harpes au cœur accordées  
Me diraient : Sœur !

Le mistral même s'est fait caresse !  
Venir ne puis  
A votre source enchanteresse  
Oiseau ne suis.

ELISABETH.

*Sestri Ponente,*  
*Le 11 Avril, 1883.*

## CHAPTER XII.

THE cares of state at an end, the crown laid aside, the purple and ermine abandoned, a lone woman steals unattended out of the castle, and makes her way towards the hill lying between the Asile Hélène and the park of Cotroceni; for near the church of Elisabeta Doâmna there is a tiny grave—become the Mecca of Moldavian and Wallachian faithful. Hither, summer and winter, spring and autumn, old and young, proud and humble, come with flowers and love-offerings. No sooner does the first crocus lift its head in April grass than some watchful hand transports it to the sainted shrine; the October rose, blowing away all its beauty on the steep gorge's side, is taken by the same mysterious watcher—but to sigh away its latest breath at the feet of the forest-guarded saint. In summer time nature holds high revel in this chosen spot; the sweetest breezes blow

night and morn through the clustering trees; the rarest flowers embroider the emerald meads with their divine bloom, the richest cadence swells from the throat of the Roman lark; that legendary warbler whose song and flight are but for the predestined of the Wallachian valleys; the notes of whose melody heard by the great, bring honour; heard by the humble, bring content. The sun floods tree and glade and aisle with a million laughing rays; the branches hang together in magic fillets, and the awe-struck peasant, looking upon them, whispers that they are the threads of a child's golden hair—a fairy network of golden threads, so fine that a breath could dissolve them, so strong that the mountain heights from Balkan to Carpathian are hung and clasped eternally in their magic embrace. In winter, when the mountains are bound in long watered ribbons of snow—when the vales are vast prairies of shimmering tissue—to the septic eye their spotlessness is untinged by aught not white; but the loving eye will see a mysterious trace on the immaculate shroud. Faint rifts and troubled veins, as if a soul in its flight had brushed its wings on the vestal stole, and left the impress of its sainted

soaring for ever stamped on the Carpathian valley and hills.

In the spring-time, when the earth bursts with its human leaven, and all nature is vocal with the sense of renewed sweetness and being, one pilgrim wends her silent way to the little shrine in the valley. The peasants draw to one side, the people to one side, and the little children of the Asile Hélène hush their careless laughter and still their happy smile; they put their golden heads together, and their juvenile voices mingle with the carol of birds nestling in the woodland trees. One says :

“Hush, it is the Queen !” but a peasant with lined face and eyes that still burn holes into her withered cheeks, old Nani, gathering her early herbs and pale lilacs, murmurs softly :

“There she goes—unhappy *doámna*! Look at her young face and grey hair! It is the mother of that poor dead baby, the little Sun-child, Maria !”

## CHAPTER XIII.

SIXTEEN years ago, Carmen Sylva, then reigning Princess of Roumania, visited England, and spent several days at Oxford in the delightful home of Professor and Madame Max Müller. She charmed everyone by her sweetness, simplicity, and naturalness. She went everywhere, she saw everything, and, promising to return shortly, expressed herself absolutely enchanted with her stay. It is true not everybody, even a Queen, could have seen Oxford under more delightful circumstances ; and it is not a matter of wonder that, with all the historic world, her Majesty should hold this mediaeval city in dear remembrance. The promised return, however, has not been made, as during this last visit to England the Queen's time was limited, and her desire to see Wales, Ireland, and other portions of the British Isles, notably Llandudno and Bray, obliged her to neglect many places of interest, even the most dear,

and shortened her stay even in London. The reason of her remaining so few hours on her return may be best given in her own words: "Oh ! my visit to Wales was delightful, delicious ; there they quite spoiled me. I love London, too. I am charmed with all I have seen, all I see, but if I stay a day longer here,"—this conversation took place at the Grosvenor Hotel, October 6th—"if I stay longer here, I must take that time away from my dear mother, and of all the world she must not be neglected. Seeing her, of course, is a pleasure, but above all it is a duty, and duty, we know, must ever come first."

The key-note to the Queen's character lies in the above words, and they need no comment.

The 4th and 5th of October was spent at Osborne. To quote Carmen Sylva, "a most delightful visit ; one I shall ever look back upon with pleasure." Carmen Sylva was speaking in her pretty voice, and holding the MS. of two plays, both of which were subsequently read to Mr. Beerbohm Tree and Mr. Comyns Carr. She added :

"I read this to the Queen ; 'Ulrandâ' it is called, but I was so nervous in the commencement that my voice was quite weak, and I did myself no justice.

However, I got on very well afterwards"—Carmen Sylva now spoke with the ingenuousness of a school-girl—"and if all her Majesty said then be quite true, then this is the selection I shall also read to you."

This was the day of her Majesty's arrival from the country. She had travelled all night, been here, there, everywhere since early morn, and not only showed no signs of fatigue, but appeared as fresh as a lark. Her last day in London was a still more memorable one, and one which I certainly never can forget.

I had heard a great deal of Carmen Sylva's marvellous powers, not alone of reading and histrionic talent, but of that more extraordinary gift, the transposition at sight of one language into another, and must confess to no little curiosity as to how the poet would justify her world-wide renown. She read '*Ulrandâ*' that afternoon, and the following morning we again assembled as early as 10.30 in the state drawing-room of the Grosvenor Hotel to hear another reading by the poet.

The apartment, filled with flowers, books, and pictures, breathed femininity; that atmosphere of intellectuality so indicative not alone of the true, but of the high-minded woman. Beside material

adornment the room was filled with eager interested people—bright eyes, bright smiles, and bright faces everywhere. That is a special contagion of the Queen's presence. She herself is like quicksilver. Everybody and everything with her lives and has being. Nothing is indifferent. Even inanimate objects seem animate, and although they do not speak, still give one to understand that they know perfectly well all that is going on. Some furniture is intelligent, and some not. One has but to look at a room to know the mind, the character of its occupant; and this one speciality, so often missed in magnificent, even dazzling apartments, is the first thing noticeable even in the simplest of Carmen Sylva's surroundings.

As soon as possible I approached a table in the window, and saw an illuminated missal, an immense volume in vellum, destined as a gift to the newly-restored cathedral of Cotroceni. This marvellous study was the work of the Queen's own hands, a miracle of beauty and invention. There were miniatures, raised letters, gilded traceries, children with faces like flowers, roses, lilies, and clambering vines so natural that the perfume seemed almost to steal

from the leaves ; page after page, each one, if possible, more ingenious and beautiful than the other. Beside her taste and talent is her astonishing quickness. Once at Neue Wied, the castle filled with guests, her idle moments produced a similar work. She began it none knew when, and in a few days, a fortnight perhaps, handed it to her mother, saying : “Here, this is for you. I did it in my lost moments.” “We were all dumbfounded,” said Professor M—— M——, “but there it was ; none knew how or when, but she had done it alone—*comme si rien n'y était.*”

Had this art been the unique study of anyone’s idle hours, it would still suggest years of consecutive and unflagging labour.

We were still examining the first-named work when the Queen came in.

Her Majesty has changed but little—the greatest noticeable difference being in the hair, once blonde, now quite grey at the temples. The slender figure and graceful bearing, which so distinguishes this royal lady, the elegant carriage and sweet composure still remain. The face is a singular oval, more narrow than round, and the deep eyes, like pansies, fringed

with their black lashes, are set in the countenance like antique jewels, and with a strange glance, as if the owner, dead for many years, were just come to life, and wondered what all this modern movement were about.

The high forehead crowned with fair hair—more than fair—is shaded by that veil that nature alone may weave—a veil which suggests that even in that bright Orient, some fillets of the Carpathian snows had gently strayed earthward, to chill the heart but to bind the brows of this pure poetical princess. A faint colour glows in the cheeks, and a delicate sensitive mouth opens over teeth of such dazzling brilliancy that one expects them rather than the lips to speak. A slender neck like a Parian column uplifts from the fine bust; the hands are white, quick, nervous, graceful, very small, and have a child-like look, as if they were younger than their mistress, or had, at least, less experience of the world. But the most remarkable characteristic of Carmen Sylva, is the long, slow, supernatural glance, and the fine facial expression: the whole countenance illumined by as bright an intellect as any our times have known. The mien, as it were, is that shadowy mask of sweetness and gentleness

which can only emanate from a mind dedicated to noble thoughts and lofty aspirations, the soul transfigured through deepest suffering and sorrow, and shining through the face. Is it art, and does the Queen know that the only way to beautify the human face is to beautify the human mind ? and yet there are women who think of Ninon's bloom, and talk of Ninon's cosmetics.

After a cordial welcome to her guests, a few words uttered with that affability and simplicity all her own, a maid-of-honour handed her a portfolio containing the manuscript of the poem, the reading of which we had been invited to hear, and her Majesty sat down.

"Come, do sit down," she said, "all around and quite near me. Ah, that is more '*gemüthlich*' and now I will read, if you are sure it will not bore you too much, either of the works you desire to hear first." After a moment's chat with Miss Terry, a moment's talk with others, after due consideration, her greatest poetical work, a tragedy in five acts, "Meister Manole" was chosen.

There was a flutter of women's petticoats, Professor Max Müller and Mr. Henry Irving seated themselves, Miss Ellen Terry drew near the Queen, and the read-

ing began. Her Majesty prefaced the tragedy by the following :

"I must first tell you that I have been studying ten years, ten years writing plays, in order to write this one. I first began with one little act, afterwards a dialogue between two women, I then wrote a little more, and then a little more, and then a little more, until finally I had arrived at what I considered a fair basis for my more important work ; the story is taken from one of the old Roumanian legends, called the Contes de Pelech, and touches upon the restoration of a marvellous cathedral, which, after twelve years' labour, has just been completed and consecrated. The legend runs that the church fell to ruin, and was continually rebuilt, but by the influence of godless spirits, it was as constantly thrown down ; in short, what the builders conceived and executed by day, was destroyed by night, until the wicked spirits were exorcised—devils, to quote Her Majesty exactly—by the immuring alive in the walls of some guilty human being, which sacrifice alone would charm away all evil, and once more restore the church to the graces and worship of God.

" Of all the Roumanian folk-lore, I conceived a

passionate fascination for this tale, and by adding historical characters, inventing some, and finding others, I made this particular one the theme of the tragedy I am about to read."

The Queen commenced, and it would seem exaggeration to say all one should say of her beautiful voice and diction, her impassioned manner of gesticulation, and great histrionic talent. It would be difficult to give the tragedy here in detail, and although a theme, to my mind, essentially unfit for any other than the Roumanian stage, it certainly is a work of the very highest merit; splendid dramatic action; in short, a masque such as might be expected from a poet-student of the old Greek drama. The Queen read in English and translated from the German as she read—a free translation as one would say—and she did this without notes or agenda of any sort. One of the most marvellous feats of mind, memory, culture, and *metier*, that I have ever known; she very seldom paused for a word, and then she did put her hand to her head with a pretty gesture, saying, "Oh, the word, the word; will someone give me the word?" and with several voluntary suggestions, always finished by herself finding one, the

strongest and most appropriate. The lyrics are at times absolutely astounding, some of the poems being not unworthy of a Heine or a Schiller. It is very evident that being a Queen has been, in one sense, very detrimental to this remarkable intellect. Had she been obliged to earn her bread and butter with her pen, she would probably have been the greatest poetess of the nineteenth century ; but the passion of production has blunted the sense of selection : everything the Queen writes is published, everything the poet might write would be subjected to the literary scalping knife. The mind that returns into itself, reasons, reduces, and criticises Carmen Sylva, has done this with "Meister Manole," and the result is a great complete work. Until one has seen Carmen Sylva one can form no adequate idea of her marvellous poetical organisation and marvellous literary capacity. She is a perfect Niagara of hidden resource, and has exercised her brains, and, like an acrobat or professional trapeze performer, constant practice has prepared her to be ready at all times for the most daring deeds. She can command her mental powers, can draw blank cheques upon her intellect, and be assured beforehand that her future capital

cannot be exhausted. She can go on, and on, and on, and there always remains the exhaustless fount of lucid and purling inspiration, the which, without proper technique, would baffle the finest genius in the world to accomplish what her Majesty accomplishes. Hers is a mind that can never be surprised, never taken by storm, and the lightning-like quickness with which its transitions are accomplished is something so startling, that, to the unaccustomed observer, such change goes to the head like a draught of strong wine to one unused to liquor. Those in daily contact with Carmen Sylva have long since got used to this display of culture, genius, and skill. I must confess that, for my part, my brains were on edge, and I felt absolutely exhausted. She goes on like this day after day, month after month, year in and year out. She would never rest, but nature, however, has taken things into her own care, and compels her to give the active brain repose. Alas, this rest is enforced upon her in the shape of most terrible illnesses, and thus the mind is obliged to remain in a state of complete passiveness—a summary way, perhaps, but, as I said before, nature is the greatest of usurers; and every gift one has out of the common,

one must pay five hundred per cent. for in suffering sorrow, misfortune, and obligatory idleness.

In speaking of Carmen Sylva, of this extraordinary tension of brain power, M. Alecsandri—so often mentioned, now gone to meet that eternal aurora he so loved—in speaking of the Queen, the poet, with Professor Max Müller, was alike astounded at such incessant brain work.

Either at Neue Wied or at Sinaïa, it is no uncommon thing for visitors at the castle to compose songs or one-act pieces. These will be set to music in the afternoon, and performed in the evening, some by her Majesty herself, others by well-known writers or amateurs, distinguished guests at the palace. Aleesandri said: "This goes on day after day. She is indefatigable, is bubbling over with art and artistic feeling, and this she must pour forth. She must produce; it is not enough that she possesses these faculties: they must be before the world. Her mind is a mint, is such a wealth of ever-coming and going creations, that one pushes the other out of her head; the thought comes, she acts upon it—it is put away done for, and then another and another comes, springs up in this fertile and extraordinary intellect."

Now it will be clearly understood that Carmen Sylva is one of the old Improvisatrice. It suffices for her but to touch the harp to sweep melody from the golden wires, to but touch the strings to cause all the air around to vibrate with the refrain of the sweet seductive music.

That she herself should possess such gifts is rare enough, but that she should leave her country, her woods and vales and forests, and go to a foreign land, and find, as it were, a creature if not so highly, at least, similarly gifted, is one of those curious coincidences that fate reserves for those patient ones who keep the door open to fortune. Mdlle. Hélène Vacaresco, her Majesty's favourite maid of honour, whose portrait we reproduce with that of her Majesty, is another such a gifted being. She can improvise by the hour, translate from the Roumanian into French or German spontaneous lyrics, of a sweetness and perfection of rhythm absolutely astounding. It is not surprising that the Queen should have attached this young lady to her royal person, or that the two should have collaborated in writing both verse and prose; in short, very much as her Majesty did with the gifted Madame Mití Kremnitz.

"Tales of the Dumbovitza," her Majesty's latest work, has just been published at Bonn. It is a collection of Roumanian legends and tales amassed here, there, and everywhere in Roumania by the Queen and Mdlle. Vacaresco, done into verse by her Majesty, and edited by Mdlle. Vacaresco.

This book is a monument of poetic literature, of superhuman work, and Professor Max Müller, in speaking of it, said: "It is most curious; wonderfully done; some of the verses very beautiful and flowing—and you know the difficulty of the double German rhythm. Some of these lyrics are so fine that the greatest German poet of the day need not have been ashamed to have written them, and it certainly is a book that will live."

No higher praise could be awarded, and Max Müller is not a man to praise unless he sees a very good reason for so doing.

So much is to be said on the theme of folklore and native legends that volumes might be dedicated to this topic alone, and still volumes would remain unwritten. In speaking with the late M. Alecsandri on this very subject, he told me frankly that of his poems, some of the so-called legends he had invented

outright, viz., two of the most exquisite and, strange to say, most successful, the “Perlenreihen” and “Die Lerche.” I give the titles as given by Carmen Sylva in her volume dedicated entirely to the works of Roumanian poets.

When questioned about the “Dumbovitza” collection, I was not at all surprised to hear Mdlle. Vacaresco, with most ingenuous refreshing sincerity, say :—

“ Oh ! we heard the stories everywhere. I went to the houses of the old, of the poor, of the peasants, sometimes alone, sometimes with the Queen ; sometimes her Majesty heard their tales, and sometimes I heard them, and recounted them afterwards verbally, faithfully to the Queen, who as faithfully put them into verse or prose. So we worked night and day”—I should think so : had she said years and years I would not have been surprised—“we worked night and day, and finally got them in shape—put together, and her Majesty is very pleased indeed with the reception the work has met with.”

That is the history of the “Dumbovitza,” and a remarkable history it is. As I have before said, the book is a monument of exhaustive labour, extraordinary research, and curious compilation. Not alone Carmen

Sylva, but her gifted handmaid, herein show more than common talent, and have every reason to be proud of such a creation, so remarkable a native and poetic collection.

The Queen's book, "*Les Pensées d'une Reine*," has been awarded a high monetary prize medal by the fastidious French Academy, while the number of her decorations from various other literary and artistic societies is something as merited as fabulous. Last but not least, her Britannic Majesty has sent the order of Victoria and Albert to her gifted cousin, not alone in remembrance of Carmen Sylva's recent visit to England, but as a special offering to the poet-author of "*Ullranda*," which tragedy would be eminently suitable to the Lyceum stage, and may be brought out at a not far distant day on the boards of this theatre.

"Meister Manole" is already in rehearsal at the Vienna Burg Theatre, and will be produced with the great Madame Wolter in the rôle of Florica. In reading the play, Carmen Sylva's voice reminded me strangely of this marvellous artist, and I told her Majesty so. She cried: "Now that is strange, for, will you believe me, I have never heard her, never

seen her on the stage." And when the first acts of this play were concluded, Florica's cry, uttered by the Queen with such heartfelt agony—"Manole ! Manole ! Manole !" —was a triumph of elocutionary art such as even a Madame Wolter might have been proud of.

The Queen is never so delightful as when one appreciates the direct cause of her work. She never takes any merit to herself, but explains at once the why, the wherefore, in short, the fountain-head of all her inspirations.

The fundamental basis of Carmen Sylva's dramatic art is—action, action, action, and this is very noticeable, even in her verse and prose. She has also the remarkable gift of distinction, the still more remarkable one of selection. I was very much struck by this in the "Ullranda" and "Meister Manole."

The life-like simplicity of some characters, the artificial complexity of others, was demonstrated by the firm workmanship of a skilled literary and dramatic artisan.

Methods of studying, of models to choose from, of authors to avoid, of authors to adore, became the theme of conversation, the Greek dramatists naturally

receiving unanimous praise. After the recital of a clever and highly-applauded scene from "Meister Manole," I involuntarily cried—

"Ah, madam! one sees, one feels, that the Greek drama has been your model."

"You do not know me and yet you could tell that?" She smiled brightly. "The Greek drama!—why, I have been *brought up* on it, I have been *fed* on it, it has been a part of my life, and not a day passes but I go back to my idols. I go back to let them see that my worship does not flag but grows in love and sincerity every year, every day, every hour. The Greek drama—ah! when you say that you say everything."

That evening a band of faithful—a few intimate friends and representatives of the Royal Family stood at the station to bid Carmen Sylva a last God-speed. The train was in waiting, crowds lined the platform, and as the Queen appeared smiling faces greeted her, cheers rent the air, and the perfume from many thousand flowers scented waiting-room and walk with their grateful fragrance. The red carpet, stretched to the Royal carriage, was a veritable bed of roses, and the Queen, a second goddess, walked

forth on her floral tapestry. Roses here, there, and everywhere, rose-leaves falling on the dusty parquet, falling on the wooden railings, and even falling beneath the wheels of the carriage. All around were animated forms and bright eyes. There was a low hum of voices, and that attitude of sincere homage so grateful to those who, yet lifted above, still live in the hearts of the people. The wide, grim station was a mass of flitting light and shadow, here and there fitful gleams, and once a sudden blaze like a falling star shot athwart a dark far corner; and for one moment only, a face like a flower, a wee child's face, was lifted upwards in the crowd.

Just at that instant the Queen turned towards the light, and saw the bright eyes gazing eagerly, longingly into *her* own. She started, smiled, blew a kiss with her fingers, and—then came a sudden darkness. The corner faded away, the child faded away, and when I looked at the Queen—alas! the pansy blue of her eyes had also faded away.

Suddenly all was bustle and confusion. There was a ringing of bells, a hurlyburly of voices, and that steady, subterranean tinkle which signals incoming and outgoing convoys. The flash of Edison's Kohinoors

showed a long shining way of metal filets; that glittering cobweb whose intricacies even the King Spider Lightning alone might pretend to thread. There was a last throwing of flowers, waving of handkerchiefs, and cries of "Long live Carmen Sylva! Long live the Queen!" and the train, like an undulating serpent, glided away on its shining earthly trail.

Everyone turned eagerly for a last look, and I saw the deep-fringed violet eyes gleaming in their white oval, and a slender form with a dusky branch on its bosom framed in the panel of the window. Another moment and Carmen Sylva was gone, leaving behind her what she was going back to—loyal friends, loving hearts, and a devoted country.

As we walked back through the waiting-room, the air was still heavy with the scent, not alone of rose and violet, but of something heavier and sweeter, familiar, but at that moment unnameable. I looked up wonderingly, and Mr. N——o, the Roumanian Chargé d'Affaires, explained :

"Yes. Did you see that large basket of reseda?"

When she first landed the Queen was very touched to receive a similar one, sent to "Carmen Sylva—From

a Working Man." A few days after came a letter of apology : the donor feared he had taken too great a liberty ; but the Queen sent him a word of thanks by her maid of honour, and to-night again came a basket, "wishing Carmen Sylva and her kingdom health, happiness, and prosperity—From a Working Man."

As the train pushed out of the station I had noticed flowers on her breast. They were neither rose, heliotrope, nor violet, but a branch of green and golden bloom, a branch of the fragrant—now significant—mignonette.

BLANCHE ROOSEVELT.

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW.





# THE MOTHER-IN-LAW.

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## CHAPTER I.

“LES yeux bleus Vont aux cieux, Les yeux noirs  
Vont en purgatoire,” cried merrily a young black-eyed  
girl in the school-room of Sacré Cœur.

“Et les yeux verts?” asked a graceful, slender  
girl, with eyes of sea-green, black lashes, and dark  
eyebrows that nearly met above her finely-formed  
nose.

“Les yeux verts Vont en enfer!” replied the  
black-eyed maiden, and her tone implied that even  
if Heaven remained closed to her, her lot would still  
be immeasurably superior to that of her companion.

The beautiful brows of the questioner gathered into  
a slight frown, but a smile was still hovering on the  
slightly-parted lips when the door opened, and a  
severe-looking nun entered the room.

“Eleonore,” she said, going straight up to the beautiful girl. The latter started, and her perfect oval face, framed in masses of waving golden brown hair, was for one instant overspread by fiery blushes, but the next it had resumed its usual pallor.

For one moment her eyelids sank, like drooping wings; then the green eyes, with their large pupils, looked full and straight into the face of the nun, their expression a mixture of defiance and mischief.

“Perhaps you can tell me, Eleonore, who has filled our piano with cockchafers?”

Silence—deep, breathless silence.

“Why should you always suspect me of everything?” said the young girl at last.

“Because here on your dress is a cockchafer that betrays you,” said the nun, lifting up the insect as she spoke. A suppressed titter went through the whole room. Every girl there was grateful to the culprit for having put a stop, for the space of a few days, to the music lessons, which they all disliked.

“Is it not possible, then, that a cockchafer may have clung to my dress in the garden?”

“Yes, certainly in the garden, where you spent half

the night. If you do not confess immediately, your whole class will be punished."

"Of course it was I who did it, and I am not in the least sorry," said Eleonore defiantly.

"In that case you will have full leisure during eight days' arrest, on bread and water, to reflect whether or no you are sorry, and for the next two months you will not be allowed to enter the garden."

How gloomy and sullen could that beautiful face become when the eyebrows met in anger; how dark a shadow clouded the eyes, how bitter the expression of the mouth. She bowed her head and followed the nun without looking to right or left. When, however, she passed by her schoolfellows she heard the words: "Dear Leo! Good Lona! Dearest Ello! Poor Ellenor!" and she felt her hand pressed in many a secret clasp.

Scarcely had the door closed when a perfect Babel of voices burst forth. The prudent and sensible girls began to blame and censure, but the wild and rebellious spirits were in a state of ecstasy.

"I tell you what," said the black-eyed girl, "tonight I mean to take away the clapper from the school bell. Our sister the portress is deaf, so she will go

on ringing and ringing, and we shall all sleep like dormice, and if they punish me, I shall be put in prison with my Ellenor—that is just what I should like ! ”

“ As for me,” cried another girl, “ I mean to plaster all the stairs with soap. And then, when the nuns want to go downstairs to-morrow morning, you will see how quick they will go ! ”

“ Eight days’ imprisonment on bread and water and two months without going in the garden ! ” cried a rosy-cheeked girl with bright blue eyes. “ It’s not so very pleasant up there in the garret ! Take my advice, and do nothing rash ! ”

High up under the roof was the little garret, the well-known little grey garret with its stone floor. Through a chink in the tiling the very tiniest patch of grey sky was visible, the only spot of lightness or brightness in the place, and Eleonore’s sad eyes, sore and weary with crying, felt impelled to wander thither, whether she would or no.

There was nothing whatever in the little attic except a plank and a coarse woollen coverlet. In former days Eleonore could remember that a table and chair used to stand there : it had, however, come to

light that she was in the habit of placing the chair on the table, and by this means climbing to the chink, through which she slipped like any cat, and of spending many hours on the steep roof, far above the murmur and hubbub of Paris. Since then, however, table and chair had been removed, and there remained only the plank bedstead. With the exception of a piece of dry bread and a pitcher of water, there was nothing else in the garret, not even a stove. If one were cold, one could wrap oneself in the woollen coverlet, which was sufficiently coarse and heavy.

Formerly the walls had been covered with all sorts of rough scribbles and sketches, verses and caricatures. These, however, had been effaced, and, to Eleonore's dismay, on first entering the garret she was forced to undress, and everything was taken from her : pencils, penknives, a little piece of fancy work ; even her most sacred possession, a little notebook that she carried hidden in her breast. She tried to tear it quickly into pieces, but the nun snatched it from her. Trembling with anger, cold, and shame, she stood there, still dressed only in her chemise, long after the lock of the door had been turned upon her ; in the meantime, the nun, who had uttered not

a word except to order her to disrobe, had disappeared with her booty.

The notebook was at once delivered to the Lady Superior, and its contents were certainly not calculated to mitigate the severity of the sentence passed against the young rebel. The pages were closely covered with satirical verses, caricatures remarkable for their striking resemblance to their originals, and various outpourings of a wild, passionate nature.

In imagination Eleonore could see the nuns putting their heads together over her little book, and could hear them blaming and condemning and accusing her on account of many a fault to which all the time they had paid too little heed. She looked at her clothes, which still lay on the floor, and said to herself.

“Were it only winter, I would leave them off entirely, so that I might freeze to death. That would serve the nuns right.”

She had fondly hoped to be sent away altogether on account of this last prank, and now instead was obliged to undergo imprisonment in its most rigorous form. A punishment task would have been almost an agreeable diversion. But the weary monotony of nothing to do stared her in the face. And

she would have to endure this for eight days ! Not a sound penetrated to her solitude, not even the groaning of the piano under the process of purification. That might have been some consolation, but already her mind had ceased to dwell on that subject ; her thoughts were busy with the fact that she was an orphan, desolate and alone in the wide world, and that she would probably be obliged to remain for some years longer in the hated convent.

Then all at once she was seized with unutterable agonised longings for the almost-forgotten land of her childhood, for the great sun of Roumania, the vast cornfields, the dark-eyed peasants with their white blouses and broad sashes, for the sweet mother-tongue that contained so many endearing expressions —“Dadina” and “Mititica” and “Dragulitză” and “Inimioara”—and all the sweet words that had been showered upon her by nurses and mother ; for she had been the only child, the idol, the domestic tyrant, and now she was here ! She was so shaken by a burst of tears that she was forced to lean against the wall. She threw herself upon the ground, buried her face in the heap of clothes that still lay on the floor near her, and sobbed out :

"Mother! my mother! maiculitza! take me to you! I am so unhappy! Darling mother, why did you die? Oh, let me hear you once again say, 'Dadina!'—mother! maiculitza!"

At last she arose and slowly dressed herself once more in the hated convent dress. It appeared to her more detestable than ever since her thoughts had dwelt for awhile on the glorious colouring of her native land, the glowing brilliancy of the sunlit landscapes, the exuberant profusion of flowers, the village maidens with their red petticoats, richly embroidered chemisettes, and wreaths of flowers entwined in their hair. It was only shame that restrained her from again tearing off her dress. It seemed to her that she could hear the gipsies in her fatherland playing long-forgotten dance-tunes on their violins; everything appeared before her with extraordinary distinctness—the scent of the newly-mown hay, the beautiful green pitchers, and the pails of white wood which the girls carried on their shoulders.

The vision made her so thirsty that she was obliged to drink. Almost immediately, however, she put down the pitcher with a shrug. That did not taste like the water at home, the glorious water

which always plays such an important part in a hot climate.

“Oh, my lovely, beautiful country!” she cried, stretching out her arms. And again her eyes filled with tears. The first night, exhausted with weeping, she slept a deep, profound sleep. She dreamt of her home, dreamt that she was lying in her mother’s arms; she could not recall her features, although she could still feel the touch of the soft flesh, the pressure of the tender bosom on which she had reclined. She was so confused on awakening that at first she could not realise where she was. The pain in her back and limbs reminded her where she had been lying; she was tired, tired to death and hungry. The bread left from yesterday was dry and tough; she only ate a small piece of it, but felt as satiated as though she had eaten too much. In order to warm herself she began to pace up and down the tiny chamber, but only grew colder and colder. When the sun rose a roseate light overspread the ceiling, which, however, was soon quenched, and garret and roof resumed their original sombre hues.

Monotony, which is so salutary for sick persons,

affects those who are in health like some fatal disease ; and the more excitable the organisation the more quickly does it succumb. The lymphatic temperament grows sleepy and melancholy, the sanguine, on the contrary, becomes wild and madly excited : hence for such a nature solitary confinement is a hazardous experiment.

By the evening of the second day, Eleonore's cheeks glowed, and that night she saw visions. One hallucination was followed by another, and her heart never ceased to throb violently. Her restless fantasy called before her excited brain one image of terror after another ; until at length she lay bathed in sweat under her little coverlet, so frightened and excited that she scarcely ventured to breathe. The sister whose duty it was to change her daily ration of bread and water, reported that she had never uttered one word since her imprisonment, and that she had dark rings round her eyes. The Lady Superior, however, remained inexorable. Atonement must be made for the indiscretions of the little notebook, even if the girl became ill in consequence.

Eleonore had such terror of the succeeding night that she never went to bed at all, but paced up and

down, up and down in the thick darkness until at last she staggered, drunken with sleep, against the wall and fell into a dreamless trance. On the following day defiance had the upper hand. All the demons of her being were aroused, as is so often the case with hermits and ascetics. All the evil element in her nature was whirling and seething in her brain, and she smiled to herself now and then at her dreams of revenge.

She felt herself capable of killing all the nuns, of setting the entire convent on fire, and with genuine delight pictured to herself tongues of flame curling and wreathing round the building; she tried to think from which side it could most easily be destroyed.

The darkness was very welcome to her to-day, her thoughts had freer scope, and she saw a red glow before her eyes. Once she looked upwards: a star was shining down upon her through the chink in the roof; for a moment the sight of it led her thoughts into a different channel. She thought of heaven, but had no belief in its existence; she had been obliged to grow up without any religion, for it had been strictly forbidden to give her any

instruction in the Roman Catholic faith. It was thus that she had gone through all the outward forms of sanctity without any comprehension of their inner and spiritual significance, and had found these forms hollow and insipid.

However, she locked her doubts securely in her own breast, and in the fatal little book that was now going from hand to hand—the diary which had caused the confessor of the convent to shake his head many times in great perplexity. Sleepless, she fought all through that night against faith and hope. Dull despair took possession of her heart, and it seemed to her as though she were thoroughly and innately wicked, as though she never had been, and never could become, good.

The next morning her face wore the tragic expression that so often had disquieted the nuns and had caused them to utter dismal prophecies. She stared before her motionless. She appeared not to perceive the presence of the sister who came to bring her bread and water; the latter went down terrified to the nuns, and declared her belief that the young girl was going out of her mind.

“And if there is a God, there is also a Devil,”

said Eleonore, with pallid lips ; “God will not help me, he has forsaken and forgotten me, so I will try if the Devil will not come to my aid.” She drew a hairpin out of her hair, tore and scratched her arm with it, and with her blood wrote “Eleonore,” in large characters, on the wall.

“ Devil ! do you hear me ! I will belong to you from henceforward if you will only take me out of this place.”

She had cried these words aloud, and now she stopped short, terrified ; she looked behind her to see whether he were already standing there before her, and nearly uttered a cry when she heard the sound of a key turning in the lock. She had not heard the sound of a footprint.

“ You are to go down at once into the parlour,” said the nun. Eleonore gazed at her speechless. “ Did you hear me ? You are to go down ; your aunt is there.”

“ My aunt ? My aunt Sabine ? ” When Eleonore entered the parlour her heart was beating so violently that she could scarcely breathe. Her aunt, a pretty young woman, hastened towards her and said :

“ Do you know that I have come to take you away

with me ? I have a husband for you ; in three weeks you will be a wife ! Are you not glad ? ”

Eleonore’s eyes wandered from her aunt to her uncle, who was also her guardian, and who, had he only understood even a little of psychology, might have wondered at the sphynx-like expression in the young girl’s face. He, however, merely nodded his bald head, rubbed his hands softly together as though he were washing them, and said :

“ Yes, a very good match.”

“ But I know no one in this wide world.”

“ Oh, that is not in the least necessary,” cried the aunt ; “ I showed him your photograph, and told him of your fortune, and he did not hesitate for a single moment. He has a beautiful estate, and a stud of horses, and his name is Scherban, and his estate is called Boldeni. It is very prettily situated with woods and vineyards, and lies on the Jalonitza, and you will be very happy there.”

Eleonore listened with her mind far away from the speaker. She had not ceased to feel the chill shudder of horror that seemed yet to freeze her veins, and she was still afraid to look round for fear that he whom she had just invoked might be standing behind her.

She would have given worlds to be able to forget what had happened a few moments since, to recall the spirit of haughty defiance that had possessed her a few days ago. Her companions ceased to envy her when they saw how changed she looked ; with dreamy eyes and pallid cheeks she bid them farewell, as though she came from some strange world to disappear like a meteor into some other strange and distant world.

“ You have given yourself to the Devil.” She felt as though someone were whispering these words in her ear. It seemed to her that the spell could never be broken until her name, written in blood, were wiped away from the garret walls. One of the girls crept upstairs to the little prison. She wanted to see whether she could find some trace of that which had wrought such a terrible change in Eleonore. She found the name, and told the others of it, and then all crept up secretly to look at it as though it were some work of magic.

With blood! What might have been her thoughts? Many questions were put to the sister who had waited on her, but she did not know or refused to know anything. The garret remained for some time in

disuse, and so the name, which gradually faded and deepened in tone, remained unperceived by the nuns.

The greatest astonishment was, however, experienced by the Lady Superior when Eleonore the unyielding entered her apartment, fell on her knees, and fervently implored her to grant her her pardon, and to forget all her misconduct, otherwise she could never, never be happy. She longed to ask for her blessing, but dared not do so, she who had given herself up to the Devil. But when the Lady Superior of her own accord laid her hand on the girl's head, the latter began to sob so wildly that the old lady thought that after all she must have been mistaken in the child, and perhaps, through all the years that Eleonore had been with her, had treated her with undue severity. Eleonore's agony of remorse, far from teaching the good nuns how injurious is the effect of solitary confinement, only served to strengthen their belief in its efficacy.

Gladly would the young girl have suffered voluntary imprisonment, have made full confession of what she had done, and by dint of fasting and penance have freed her soul from the curse that rested on it. Too late; the heavy gates of the convent closed behind

her. Her innocent childhood was a thing of the past, and she drove away into the great stream of life.

The pilot who from time to time undertook to guide the bark of her destiny was little calculated either to subdue or to comprehend the tumult of passionate emotion raging in her soul. Her kind aunt hurried her from one shop to another, in order to get her as superb a trousseau as possible, and imagined that in so doing she was acting a mother's part to the orphan. Then they went to the photographer. Eleonore's beauty must be represented in twelve different positions and toilettes. Eleonore has as yet scarcely seen anything of Paris, and what she saw of it now was little more than an endless succession of streets and shops. She had, however, the benefit of motion, of activity, and of change of scene; also she experienced a certain girlish pleasure in pretty dresses and finery, and in the consciousness of her own beauty.

Besides, since she had heard of the bridegroom whom she had never seen, and had not the faintest desire to see, she was by no means impatient to set out on her homeward journey. When, however,

Vienna already lay behind her, she began to take pleasure in the thought of home, and even to picture its aspect to herself.

On nearing the Roumanian frontier, her heart, in spite of herself, began to beat with joy at sight of the harnessed buffaloes toiling along the roads, yoked to drays or waggons, and of the carts, drawn by twelve to eighteen diminutive horses: these sometimes guided by a single lad, riding postillion fashion, and attired in white shirt, broad waistband, and lambswool cap. Already the heavens were of a different hue, of that deep, intense blue of eastern lands, with that great, great sun, that seems to have so many more rays than in colder countries. The air had become intensely hot, but, in spite of the clouds of dust, Eleonore enjoyed the heat like a lizard. While at the convent she had literally pined for the sunshine of her native land, and had laughed at her schoolfellows when they had complained of the warmth, and pulled down the blinds; she, on the contrary, loved to warm herself in the intense white heat of a Paris sun.

The travelling party had quitted the railway, and were seated in a roomy comfortable carriage, with eight posthorses and two postillions, driving in Rou-

manian tempo, through the fertile country to Morineni, her uncle's estate.

Eleonore was in ecstasies at the rapid course, at the cries of the postillions, and the cracking of their whips ; at the beautiful scarlet petticoats, white bodices and veils of the women working in the fields. Peasants rode past them who sat on horseback as gracefully as though they were a part of the animal they bestrode ; their white cloaks floated backwards as they rode, displaying their linings of fur : on the outer surfaces these cloaks were richly embroidered, as were also the men's closely-fitting sleeveless waist-coats. Women likewise rode past, who sat their horses like men, hushing their babies as they rode, and herds innumerable wended their way towards the mountains.

Eleonore laughed at the shaggy donkeys, literally robed in fur, who carried the shepherd's baggage, and at the dogs, who looked to her like jackals and young bears.

Out of sight, already out of sight, as in a dream. As in a dream the happy days of childhood came back to Eleonore, the days when she had roamed through the fields with her father, and had tasted pieces of

*mamaliga*, just taken out of the black pot for the morning meal. At every moment some well-remembered sound of home struck her ear. "Oh, my beautiful mother-tongue!" she thought, but when she tried, in thought, to form sentences, she was no longer able to do so, and her eyes filled with tears at the idea of having forgotten the language of her childhood, of her native land. She laughed aloud at the sight of a little urchin—save for a very scanty shirt and huge lambswool cap, destitute of clothes—who had taken up in his arms a goose, nearly as big as himself, in order to save it from the attacks of an enormous pig.

Far away in the distant fields she could see the outlines of the great cross-bars by means of which buckets are lowered into the wells, and when they had come nearer she saw the peasant maidens standing barefooted, with their skirts caught up on one side, and carnations in their hair, also on one side, just at the back of the ear.

Out of sight, out of sight; then a whole herd of buffaloes came towards them, perhaps a hundred head of these antediluvian animals; they were hurrying towards the river, into which they plunged speedily, so

that only their shining noses and retreating horns were visible above the water. Now the travellers themselves had reached the Furth, and through its waters they drove, the drivers shouting to the horses, and urging them on with loud cries; the river was greatly swollen by a downfall of rain, and Eleonore's heart beat with terror when the raging waters almost forced their way into the carriage, threatening every moment either to overturn or bear away the entire equipage.

"We shall soon be home now," said the aunt; "I think that most likely Scherban will have ridden out to meet us, and give us greeting. Yes, there he is, on one of your uncle's horses."

At that moment two horsemen came riding towards the carriage; one from the right, giving greeting to the uncle, the other from the left, bowing to the aunt.

Eleonore scarcely vouchsafed a glance to the bearded horseman on her left, he being neither tall nor handsome, whereas the cavalier on her right was tall and lithe as a pine-tree, with deep-set black eyes under bushy eyebrows, a long, waving moustache and an aquiline nose—a superb bandit's face.

When she saw this handsome man bowing gracefully before her, she felt a strange thrill that seemed

to penetrate to her heart's core. The aunt meanwhile had been talking so earnestly with the other horseman that she had for a moment forgotten her niece; now, however, she turned eagerly toward her:

"Eleonore—my cousin Scherban!" The young girl blushed up to the roots of her hair and bowed gravely and silently. Her heart seemed to grow cold as a stone. He was not at all handsome, the other rider: the aunt must have made some mistake in speaking. The good-looking equestrian was then introduced to her as "cousin Mihai."

So it was really true: that insignificant man yonder was her *fiancé*, to whom she belonged already without any possibility of refusal. It was horrible!

The two young men galloped along beside the carriage, and now others came riding to meet them; stewards and peasants, huntsmen and schoolmasters, so that a whole cavalcade entered the courtyard and garden of Morineni. The two cavaliers sprang from their horses in order to help the ladies out of the carriage, and it so happened that Scherban gave his hand to Frau Sabine, Mihai to Eleonore.

They entered the vestibule, which felt fresh and cool after the heat of the journey, and there they

found an array of maidservants awaiting them with bouquets of flowers; at once the attendants began to remove their travelling-wraps.

The hall opened directly into the drawing-room, while to right and left the doors of various sleeping-apartments stood open. The windows of the drawing-room commanded a pretty view of river and pond,—indeed, of several ponds, and of a wood far away in the glimmering distance. Trays were at once brought with Dultchatza and water, ice-cold water, which refreshed the heated and thirsty travellers. Eleonore declared that she was not in the least tired, while her aunt threw herself upon a low divan, seized a fan lying there and began to fan herself energetically and noisily.

The party did not long remain together; as soon as the uncle had greeted his retainers and servants, they betook themselves to different chambers of the one-storeyed house and began to make their toilettes.

Eleonore was soon dressed and leaning dreamily against her open window, when her aunt entered the room hastily.

“Well, how do you like him?”

“Who?”

“Scherban, of course.”

“Not at all, aunt.”

“But, child, how can you say such a thing!  
You *must* like him *now!*”

“Must I? I like the other much better.”

“Which other? What—he! Goodness gracious!—you musn’t think of liking him, child. He has squandered his whole fortune, and now he is living with us, just for a time, wears the uncle’s shirts, rides his horses, and now and then gets a little pocket-money when he asks me for it very prettily. He is not a man that any girl could think of as a husband, dear. Scherban is an excellent man, so sober and steady; so good and kind to his workpeople, and to his mother! Ah, when you see her, you can’t help loving him.”

“Does he live with her?” asked the young girl coldly. She was greatly displeased at her aunt’s words, and a feeling of most bitter disappointment had crept over her, causing the glorious May day to appear grey and cold.

“Of course he lives with her, always! She will fill the place of a mother to you!”

"But I am not yet even decidedly engaged to him?"

"With your permission, you are—most decidedly engaged. The engagement is already well known throughout the whole district."

"What the whole district knows is surely of very little consequence?"

"Not at all, but it is quite impossible now to withdraw our consent; if you think that in that case you would get that scamp, that good-for-nothing for your husband, you are very much mistaken; you shall never get him, I promise you. You are very ungrateful, Eleonore, after we have taken such pains to provide for your future."

The aunt burst into tears.

"Well, well, don't cry, dear aunt; I only asked just for the sake of asking."

After dinner the four sat down to their whist-party. Eleonore was to look on; soon, however, she got up and went out on the broad verandah; she longed to be alone. Scherban had sat next her at dinner and talked to her with great enthusiasm of his future plans and schemes; these embraced everything, except any notion of travelling. Eleonore

remarked the omission, and at the bare thought of passing the rest of her days in the country with this good, steady man and his mother, she felt as though the demon of *ennui* had taken possession of her. "If the mother resembles her son," she thought, "I might as well order my funeral at once."

The mother, however, did not resemble her son, as Eleonore discovered on the day following, when a tall, stately lady entered the drawing-room; a lady with Roman nose, large, dark eyes, and black eyebrows that formed a sharp angle against the inner corner of the eye and nearly met over the nose. She had two even rows of faultless teeth, making a centre of light and brilliancy in the dark face, while her voice came deep and full from between. Her hair, which was raven black, and as yet without any touch of silver, was parted in smooth braids above a forehead that was low, firm and regular in outline. She was accompanied by two daughters, of whom the one resembled her, the other her son. They gazed, full of curiosity, at their brother's intended bride, while the mother, Frau Pulcheria, having in one glance rapidly surveyed and studied

her, kissed her in friendly fashion on the forehead, during which the young girl bowed her head over the elder lady's hand.

Eleonore experienced an indescribable sensation of awe and fear in the presence of this imposing woman, and thought: "If only her son were like her! I would serve him, wait on him hand and foot!"

She went and sat near her future mother-in-law. In spite of the feelings of timidity and awe with which the latter inspired her, she took refuge with her, in order to escape from the questions of the young girls and the possible declarations of her intended. She would so much have liked to speak with Mihai, but he kept out of her way.

"Don't you think she has beautiful green eyes?" said Scherban to Mihai, who was smoking and throwing away one cigarette after another.

"Who?"

"Why, of course, Eleonore, my intended."

"You are right, they are certainly green," answered Mihai, in an indifferent tone.

"But how cold you are—and in the presence of so much beauty—you, who profess to be an admirer of women!"

"I? I have seen so many beautiful women, and besides, she is not my intended. I wish she were," he added, but in such a low voice, with his teeth in his cigarette, that Scherban did not hear.

For the next five weeks there was to be unusual gaiety at Morenini. At the end of that time the wedding was to take place, and then, thought Eleonore, there would be an end of everything. She never saw her intended alone, and had not the slightest inclination to do so; she was very content to take interminable rides with him, her two future sisters-in-law, Mihai, and her uncle, and in the evening to dance to the sound of Aunt Sabine's polkas and waltzes.

Mihai was a wonderful dancer: the partner hanging on his arm did not feel her feet touch the floor. Neighbours came from far and near, there were games in the garden, there was eating of ices, and rowing on the lake, visits to the stables and devouring of bonbons, which, according to custom, came every three days from Bucharest, together with a magnificent bouquet. Luckily, the period of betrothal does not last long in Roumania, otherwise the bridegroom might easily ruin himself in the flowers and sweets of which he is expected to send a daily supply.

"Do you know what sort of woman you have for a mother-in-law?" said Eleonore's uncle one day.

"She is a wonderful woman, and I reverence her!"

"Not enough! not enough! It was the thought of her that induced us to select her son for your husband. There must be some good in a man who has such a mother."

"If he only looked like Mihai!" thought Eleonore, and trembled at the thought; then she said aloud:—

"But he bears very little resemblance to her!"

"That does not matter, child; she has brought him up and has filled his mind with her own grand ideas."

Eleonore gazed at her uncle, astonished. She had as yet heard no grand ideas from her intended; but possibly he was reserving them for a later period. During the dance Mihai had said all kinds of beautiful things to her, had uttered phrases full of deepest feeling and emotion that had set her thinking; he had even composed exquisite sonnets in French; his was certainly a cultured mind.

Scherban, however, talked of the harvest of the poor on his estate, of the work that she would have

to do, and Eleonore had no sort of inclination for work; rather than take the burden of life on her shoulders, she preferred to bloom idly in the consciousness of her superior beauty. Her uncle continued :

"She—your mother-in-law—saved her husband from Siberia!"

"From Siberia?"

"Yes; at the time when the Russians held possession of the land. Nowadays people have no conception of the state of things at that time. The land groaned under the weight of heavy burdens, and short work was made of those who were unwilling to bear them. A large number of soldiers were quartered in Frau Pulcheria's house, and their presence was rendered the more unendurable to her by the rough behaviour of the captain, who conducted himself as though he were master of the house. He had his host's horses taken out of the stables that his own might be placed there; he raged and swore the whole day long; the vexations he caused were innumerable. One day he demanded something that no creature in the place could understand—seeing that he could speak no language except the Russian—

and as Frau Pulcheria was sitting on the divan with her husband, this rough, half-savage fellow entered the room, swearing and cursing in his own language, and rushed at the master of the house, threatening him with his clenched fist. The latter sprang to his feet, and was about to defend himself, when—like a lightning flash—Frau Pulcheria came between the two, and gave the insolent captain two such terrible boxes on the ear that he tumbled backwards; then she got up from the divan and walked majestically out of the room.

“But, wife, what have you done !” said her husband.

“I have done what you would otherwise have done, but what would have cost you your head, or at any rate have sent you to Siberia, in which case we should have been separated for ever ! You see if he is not tame from this day forward.”

And she was right. Scarcely half an hour had elapsed before the Russian came slinking into the room, humbled and repentant, begging and entreating that the affair might be kept secret, as otherwise it might have serious consequences for him, and from that day forwards he was a very model of politeness.

Eleonore was charmed with this story, was full

of admiration for her mother-in-law, and was comforted at the thought that the latter would form one of her future household; it would be so much more amusing to talk with her than with Scherban.

At the bridal ceremony, Eleonore suffered from no sort of emotion or excitement, but was sufficiently calm and self-possessed to let her eyes wander through the church. She looked extraordinarily beautiful under the golden threads, which, in place of the usual veil, fell downwards from her head, covering the whole of her train, and, following the undulating lines of her body like a mass of golden hair, enveloped her in glory, like so many sun-beams.

"When you walk around the altar," her little sister-in-law Linza had said to her, "don't forget to think of me, and to slide your feet ever so little forwards—then I shall also get a husband."

Eleonore remembered the young girl's wish, and just as she was passing under a shower of blossoms, she lifted her eyes in search of little Linza's nut-brown face and fiery black eyes; but instead of these encountered the burning orbs of Mihai, who was gazing at her with unconcealed admiration and

desire. She was so startled and terrified that for a moment she tottered. Was it the Devil who had looked at her? Why did that thought occur to her now—she had quite forgotten it, of late. As she bowed her head before the altar, in the act of kissing testament and cross, the golden circlet and cross, which it is customary to wear during a portion of the marriage ceremony, fell from her brow and rolled on the ground, a terribly evil omen. The two sisters-in-law, wilful Linza and earnest Zoe, gazed at each other in astonishment; Mihai's face wore an ironical smile, and he took the ends of his long moustachios between his teeth. He also had noticed that Eleonore could scarcely suppress her laughter when the crown was placed on her husband's head—it was so unbecoming to him! If Frau Pulcheria was not edified by all this, she did not allow any one to perceive the fact; she stood like a statue near her daughter-in-law, to whom she was bridesmother.

A year and a half had elapsed, and little Linza was returning from one of her interminable country walks. She loved to sit and roast in the July sun without any hat, and the July sun of Roumania will

often bring the thermometer up to fifty degrees. She had been running for a long distance, and had grown tired all of a sudden, when she perceived a cart-horse grazing on the meadow. It had its feet chained together, and from time to time lifted its front feet with a little spring in order to get to a less barren patch of ground, to find a few blades of green grass. Quick as thought she unloosed the chain, and was sitting like a boy on the back of the unsaddled and unbridled horse, explaining to it by means of a few light blows on neck and ears the direction whither she desired to be carried. At first the horse shook its head, but Linza allowed it to eat up the entire bouquet of flowers with which she had intended to adorn her dress and hair at dinner, and coaxed it to go further. She soon came to a dense, shady wood, where the horse found it much more agreeable to munch fresh grass and leaves than to go further. Linza waited for awhile; on a sudden she became aware of voices close by, and soon recognised the tones of Eleonore's voice.

“No, Mihai; let me go! I will go; I must get home! you terrify me!”

Linza stretched her little brown head forward over



the horse's neck, and held her breath, while her eyes glittered like those of a wild cat.

"It's of no use," said the other voice. "You have trifled with me for so long, I am in earnest now, and you shall escape me no longer!"

"I have not trifled with you," gasped Eleonore; "it's not true! But you are the Devil, I know you are! You tempt me to sin. You see that I am weak and disappointed and miserable, and instead of helping me, you make use of my misfortunes to serve your own ends. Let me go, I say!"

"I will let you go when it pleases me, not before."

"Oh, but set me free, I implore you. I am half dead with terror!"

"Terror? what of? of the trees? For there is no living soul here, far and wide. Call as loud and as long as you like, no one can hear you! You are in my power!"

"I hate you!"

"No, that you don't! you have loved me ever since the moment when we first met; and as for your having married Scherban notwithstanding, that was your own affair. You had already perjured

yourself when you did so; you were already lost, even then, Eleonore, and you belonged to me from that time forward! You know this very well!"

"Oh, Mihai! have you no pity for me? Am I not sufficiently miserable already?"

"That's just it! out of sheer pity for you, I wish to make you happy and teach you what love really means. You have as yet no conception of it, my poor child!"

Just at that moment Linza gave her horse such a blow with a branch that she had torn from one of the trees, that it began to trot, and so she came riding past the lovers, nodding and laughing at them as she rode. For some time she continued to look back at them, showing her white teeth.

As soon as she reached home, she sprang from her horse, flew to her mother, and related to her in minutest detail all that she had seen and heard.

An hour later Linza and Zoe were looking out of the window. They saw Eleonore coming homewards, walking slowly, and with bowed head.

"I hate her!" said Zoe.

"Mother says that Scherban must not hear a word of this. Just think! poor Scherban!"

“ You have not told anyone of what you saw ? ”

“ God forbid ! No one.”

“ Only Keti, and Maritza, and Sophie, and——”

“ Stop ! stop ! Not so many as that ! ”

“ Only two of them, then ! Don’t I know you ?  
you are incorrigible ! ”

“ Eleonore ! ” called the deep voice of Frau Pulcheria from her window.

The person thus addressed trembled visibly, and became very pale.

“ Eleonore, come up here to me, if you please ! ”

As soon as Eleonore entered the room, Frau Pulcheria locked the door behind her, and let the portière fall over it.

“ The matters that we have to discuss are not for strange eyes and ears,” said the mother-in-law. “ If your life here does not please you, and you take no pains to conceal the fact from us, we can bear with you patiently ; if, however, you seek consolation in love affairs away from this house, we are not obliged to put up with the indignity. I think of keeping silence for the present, in order not to break my son’s heart ; if, however, you continue to cover his name with shame, I shall not shrink from the terrible pain

that I shall be forced to make him suffer. But as for you, I shall have you flogged from this place. Do you understand?"

Eleonore fell on her knees.

"It is all a calumny," she stammered; "it is not true! I entreat you, dear mother, be merciful!"

"I have warned you. I require no confessions; I wish to know nothing. Now go."

She opened the door with her firm hand, and allowed Eleonore to pass out of the room, trembling inwardly before the flaming eyes of her mother-in-law.

But it is a well-known fact that no lock is so strong and no wall so high as to be impregnable to love.

Months had passed. Scherban had gone to Bucharest about some legal business, and no one knew exactly when he was likely to return. October was there in all its glory, and everywhere people were busy with the vintage. It was such an abundant season, that old wine-casks were being emptied because there were not sufficient new ones ready for use. In spite of all this, entire vineyards were left perforce ungathered.

House and grounds were deserted, for all hands were busy in the vineyards. Frau Pulcheria had also been out of doors, and on her return she remained for a moment standing in front of the portico, shading her eyes with her hand, and looking out over the golden glimmering landscape. On a sudden she became aware of a conversation carried on in subdued whispers in the room directly above her, of which she could only catch a few words.

“To the Devil, Eleonore?”

“Yes, I belong to him.” Then, once more the words were inaudible.

“I entreat you! go away! They might return!”

“What if they do? Have I not a perfect right to visit you?”

“Oh, you don’t know with what my mother-in-law has threatened me! I am shaking with fear.”

“You will have an opportunity of admiring my *aplomb*!”

“Oh, Mihai, I’d rather you went away!”

Frau Pulcheria was supporting herself against the wall; she pressed her hand to her heart, and opened and shut her lips as though in great physical pain.

If Eleonore could but have seen the flame in her eyes!

At that moment the house door opened, and Mihai stood before her.

For a few minutes both remained speechless.

Frau Pulcheria was the first to regain her composure.

"My son will be here in a few moments," she said; "will you not wait to see him?"

"Oh, no, certainly—I don't know—I only wished to see—I am afraid I haven't the time now—it is vintage at my cousins'; I couldn't be of any use there—I thought I should find Scherban here."

Thus he stumbled from phrase to phrase. Frau Pulcheria looked at him scornfully, and her eyes glittered.

"We also are very busy here," she said.

"I will therefore take the liberty of bidding you goodbye."

Frau Pulcheria inclined her head, and passed by him into the house.

Eleonore was standing, half hidden by the window curtains, when her mother-in-law entered the room.

She was trembling like a leaf, and already, in

imagination, saw herself doomed to undergo the just punishment of her sin. But Frau Pulcheria uttered not a single word : she only looked at her daughter-in-law, perhaps for the space of a quarter of an hour. Eleonore kept tight hold of the curtain, so as to prevent herself from falling, and the curtain trembled with her weight, and threatened to give way every moment.

And still Frau Pulcheria said never a word.

At last Zoe, like an angel of deliverance, came into the room to ask her mother about something, and Frau Pulcheria went out with her, and left Eleonore standing there. The latter was obliged to go to bed with acute headache, and could appear no more that day. She continued to tremble long after she was in bed, and for some time could not restore the warmth to her chilled frame.

Eleonore was out of health at this time, and so irritable that it was very difficult to get on with her. She quarrelled continuously with Linza more especially, and these two played tricks on each other whenever they could. One day they had a quarrel, and Eleonore was roaming through the house full of vengeful thoughts, but nowhere could she find the

little elf, Linza. On a sudden she heard the tones of Linza's violin coming, apparently, from the bathroom. Astonished, she opened the door noiselessly : there was the young girl standing in the copper bath, and listening entranced and delighted to the tones of her violin, which sounded wonderfully rich and full on account of the echo. Eleonore crept along, softly as a cat, turned on all the taps, and set the water flowing, so that in a moment of time Linza found herself and her violin flooded with water. The poor child wept with vexation and anger, for she believed her beloved violin to be ruined for ever.

“Gipsy !” called Eleonore, laughing, and had vanished before Linza could come up with her.

In that same hour Scherban was galloping at full speed through the fields, where his horse's rapid tread bowed the young corn and set it waving ; the superb horse was covered with foam which fell about him in flakes and bespattered his rider. The sun radiated such springtime heat that the trees bloomed anew, and the sod burst afresh with the slender, up-springing herb. A haze of silvery vapour steamed up from the smoking earth, and from all the vine-clad hills, far and near, there came the sound of snapping

cords, joyful outcries, stray shots, stamping feet, and happy laughter. The lads had driven up to the house of the rector in a cart drawn by four oxen, had called out his beautiful young daughter, crowned her with grapes and vineleaves, and had conducted her, with accompaniment of flutes and fiddles, to the great wine-vat, where the finest grapes lay piled in a clean white sack.

The girl's mother had to take off her shoes, and shorten her petticoats, and then she danced upon the grapes to the sound of music. This was the first treading, or pressing of the fruit, and from this the finest and richest wine was obtained. When the young girl was thought to have danced sufficiently, her betrothed was allowed to approach her, and to kiss the soles of her feet, a proceeding viewed with envy by all the other lads, who cried :

“ How beautiful and rosy you are ! Has the spring boxed your ears, Viorica ? ”

Scherban tore past, without vouchsafing a single glance to all this glory and gaiety. Formerly he had taken such delight in the joyous merriment of the young people ; had looked with such pleasure at the tall youths, with flowing locks, black as ravens'

feathers, and eyes like blackberries ; at the graceful maidens with their supple figures, the delicate outline of the bust just visible under their richly-embroidered bodices. He was wont to assist at all the weddings and christenings in the neighbourhood, and was beloved by old and young. When the villagers saw him riding by in mad haste, they suddenly became hushed and sad, and gazed at one another for some moments with wide-open eyes. Then jests flew hither and thither, jests that abounded in humour, and at the same time were often full of poetry, for never were youth and maiden at a loss for a repartee in their answers to one another.

Scherban dismounted in the garden so as to reach the house unseen and unheard. The horse trembled from head to foot, its nostrils quivered, and a network of veins was visible through its silky coat ; its mane shone like burnished gold, with tints similar to those of the autumn foliage, that seemed as though it had absorbed the golden glory of the sunbeams. It appeared, indeed, as though the leaves had retained all the sunshine on which they had gazed through the long summer days, and were now trying to shine and glow like the sunbeams themselves.

Frau Pulcheria's sharp ears had heard the horse's tramp and she was standing at the window when her son, deadly pale and with a rapid tread, came up the garden path towards the house. When she saw his face, her brow was furrowed with lines of care and sorrow. However, her dark eyes met his grave and calm, as he entered the room with beads of sweat on his forehead, and, without giving her any greeting, threw two letters on the table in front of her.

"There, mother, read. It is true they are anonymous, but still you must read them."

"But who would care to trouble themselves about anonymous letters?"

"I know, mother, it is a cowardly thing to do; it is everything that is foolish, it is what you will, but just read!"

She let her eyes wander over the missives. In a few seconds she had read them—had she not anticipated their contents?—but still she kept her eyes fixed on the papers in front of her, in order to collect her thoughts and to say what was most judicious.

"But, mother, this is a most abominable scandal. Mihai is my friend. He, surely, would not be so

wicked, so shameless, as to——” he put his hands convulsively to his head.

“Of course not, Scherban! How can you believe for one moment in a hoax that some wicked person is trying to play on you?”

“No, I don’t believe it, mother, as you see; I don’t believe it for an instant. Only, how could anyone invent such a story, unless he and my wife had at least been careless?”

“But it is just the most innocent who are often the most careless.”

“You have perfect confidence, then, in my wife, mother?”

“I would never disgrace our name by allowing the shadow of suspicion to rest on your wife.”

“You have had more opportunities of observing her lately than I have, mother; haven’t you found her ill at ease, absent-minded?”

“Not that I am aware.”

“Mihai has been here often?”

“No, not so often as formerly.”

“Not so often? Mother, it is ridiculous, but the thought of his not having been here so often fills me with anxiety. Tell me, mother, that my wife is pure

and I will believe you. For you observe everything ; no footstep, no sound escapes you."

Frau Pulcheria looked at her son as though she were about to subdue some terrible monster.

"Your wife is innocent, Scherban."

"Swear it, mother!"

She suppressed a fit of trembling that threatened to convulse her tall frame, even to her lips.

"I swear it."

With a feeling of horror she saw him go to a corner of the room where her sacred images were placed, under a lamp that was kept continually burning. He brought them to her.

"Mother, lay your hand upon the sacred images, and swear to me that my wife is faithful."

He watched her like a hungry animal, and followed each of her movements with his eyes.

She lifted her hand slowly, as though it were of lead, and placed it on the sacred images.

"I swear!" She had raised her eyes to Heaven, and her heart lifted up a fervent petition that even a false oath might be forgiven to a mother's all-conquering love.

"Oh thanks, mother! thanks, mother!" He laid

the images on the table, fell on his knees before her, and covered her hands with tears and kisses.

"You have saved my life, mother ! I could have endured anything, everything, but not this ! I know I am neither handsome nor agreeable, but I love her so madly ! She must feel this ! Perhaps some day she will be touched by it ; perhaps some day she will learn to care for me. It would have broken my heart, I should have committed some cowardly deed ! You have saved me, mother ; for your eyes observe and your lips have never yet uttered a falsehood." Then he left her.

For a moment she remained standing and gazing back after him ; then she fell on her knees, took up the sacred images and was about to kiss them, but put them back in their place.

"Never again, as long as I live, may these lips touch cross or ikon !" she said to herself, and leaning her forehead against the edge of the table, she wept bitterly, bitterly as in the stormy and passionate days of her youth. "I was obliged to preserve my child ! God pardon me ! God pardon me ! I am only a poor, weak mother ! Pardon me, holy Virgin ! thou, who knowest the depths of a mother's heart."

When she arose from her knees she knew that as long as she lived she would have to bear the burden of a sin from which no power in Heaven or earth could release her. She was, however, a woman of strong character, and thought that out of love to her child she would be able to endure a load that in all the course of her virtuous and spotless life her shoulders had never yet stooped to bear—the consciousness of guilt and sin—of swearing to a false oath. As Scherban embraced his young wife, who blushed crimson under his steady gaze, he never imagined the sacrifice that his mother had just made for his sake.

It was afternoon, and Scherban had gone with his sisters to see the vintage. Eleonore complained of fatigue and remained at home. Her mother-in-law entered the room.

“You are not aware, I presume, that your husband has been informed of your conduct by letters, and that I have sworn to him that you are innocent.”

“There is no one but Linza who could have done that!” cried Eleonore.

“It seems to me that you are not in a position to accuse others, seeing that it is with the greatest

difficulty you can defend yourself. The letters were anonymous."

"So much the worse if he believes in them."

"He does not believe in them, but, let me tell you, the strength of his passion for you is such that if he is once more led to suspect you, he is capable of killing both himself and you."

At that moment the sound of cracking whips and postillions' cries rang through the air, and a carriage containing Frau Sabine, Uncle Raelu, and cousin Mihai drove up to the house.

"Here we are again!" cried Frau Sabine cheerily, "for we guessed you would be having a lively time during the vintage!"

"They have all gone to the vineyards," said Frau Pulcheria, coming forward to welcome her guests.

"All? What, Eleonore also?"

"No, dear aunt, I am here!" sounded from the window, and Eleonore's charming, flushed face was bent forward.

"Well, then, come with us. Where is your husband?"

"He is gone out; I'll come directly."

"You know that a short time ago you were not

well enough to go out," said Frau Pulcheria, with stern voice and threatening eyes.

"Is it not possible that I may be better now?" came the answer, curt and snappish.

"No, you are not better, and I command you to remain at home."

"Oho! how severe!" said the uncle.

"I am a disagreeable mother-in-law," said Frau Pulcheria, smiling.

"Well, then, I shall remain here," said Aunt Sabine.

Eleonore would have preferred to be left alone, so as to be able to weep undisturbed over her vexation and disappointment. She gazed after the men with longing eyes as they walked away in the direction of the vineyards. Frau Sabine seated herself on a small divan and compelled Eleonore to sit beside her.

"You and your mother-in-law don't seem to get on very well together," she said, in a half whisper, and with an air of importance.

"How is it possible we can get on together, aunt? It seems I am disobedient."

"I suppose she's too fond of keeping you in

leading strings? But I assure you she does it out of purest love and goodwill to you."

"Do you think so?" said the young wife, bitterly. A torrent of hot, angry words trembled on her lips, but for very fear she kept silence.

"And your husband—he is kind to you, is he not?"

"Oh, yes, certainly, very kind! kind as a sheep! He does everything that I wish!"

"That's bad, very bad!" said Frau Sabine, and she looked as full of care and thought as was possible with her cheery face.

Eleonore laughed.

"You seem to be prejudiced in favour of the arguments of Saint Nicholas, aunt."

"It would be far better for you if you were just a very little afraid of your husband; you would be much fonder of him in that case."

Eleonore looked thoughtfully on the ground.

"Perhaps you are right, aunt," she said slowly.

"I will teach him how to manage you!" cried Frau Sabine, laughing.

She found her niece strangely absent-minded that afternoon, for Eleonore was listening with strained

ears for the only footstep that she cared to hear. But the evening shadows closed in, and the uncle came back alone.

Mihai, he said, had already ridden home. It seemed to Eleonore as though her heart were turning to stone, especially when she heard her uncle say that in fourteen days they should be moving into the city, as the theatrical season had already begun. For herself, she would be forced this winter to remain in the country ; it was important that she should have repose, said Frau Pulcheria.

It was January, and earth and air glistered with crystalline clearness. On the 2nd the thermometer still registered fifteen degrees above zero, and now it had fallen to eighteen degrees below zero. It froze about as hard as it could freeze. Youths and maidens had even been forced to postpone the pleasure of sleighing on account of the extreme cold, and were busy with preparations for the carnival, the first they would have spent in the capital.

Frau Pulcheria breathed more freely in the consciousness that the danger of Mihai's immediate presence had ceased to exist—at any rate, for the next

few months—and now that she was no longer occupied in guarding the honour of her son, she began to busy herself with plans and projects for the marriage of her daughters.

Eleonore might have found her solitude more endurable had it not been for the terrible eyes that seemed to be ever watching her like a tortured conscience. She would have been better able to endure Scherban's devoted love, if his mother and sisters had not been witnesses to it, and often, through a quick and expressive glance, reproached her far more bitterly than they could have done in words. Scherban was full of the most devoted attentions for her, and his sisters, when alone together, often expressed their anger against Eleonore, saying how little she deserved such goodness. They dared not speak of these things to their mother; she had strictly forbidden them ever to mention this subject before her.

On this very day at last the sledge stood ready before the door, and Scherban said he meant to drive his mother himself; he could not think of allowing the ladies to take the long journey alone in the depth of winter.

“In three days I shall be back, my dearest! You

must not let yourself be dull. You have your piano, and your books, and household matters. I shall make all possible haste!" And a few moments later the sledge was gliding away noiselessly and with such speed that the sound of the sledge-bells became every second more and more indistinct, until soon it had died away altogether.

Eleonore returned to her room sighing deeply; she thought of all the lovely balls that were to be given that season, and of the exquisite Paris toilettes that she had not yet so much as unpacked; then she heard a loud crackling sound on the snow, and a messenger was standing before the door with a letter, addressed to her.

As she opened it, her hands trembled, and she sank again into her chair, unable to stand. It ran thus:—

"At nightfall you will find a sledge awaiting you in the garden. If you love me, pack a few things together, take some money with you, and get into the sledge; at the nearest cross-road I will join you and in a few days we shall be at Nice."

Eleonore leaned back in her chair, feeling faint and almost ready to swoon. She had to make a

decision which, at one stroke, would change the whole course of her life. But with him—at his side—would it not indeed be heaven !

Twenty times she sprang up and began to pack her things together ; then sat down again and pressed her folded hands convulsively between her knees. Until evening she remained firmly resolved not to go, but when evening came she heard the sound of sledge-bells behind the garden door, and without stopping for a moment to reflect, wrapped herself in her beautiful fur cloak, put on her little hat of otter-skin, seized her bundle of clothes and some money, and ran, without once looking round, towards the garden door. She recognised neither coachman nor horses ; scarcely, however, had she entered the sledge when the fiery beasts plunged forward and tore along at headlong speed. She looked about in the gathering darkness for Mihai, but saw no sign of him. Her heart beat audibly when, on the outskirts of the wood, she perceived a large number of animals gliding stealthily along ; in the darkness and snow they had somewhat the effect of monsters.

“Are those buffaloes ?” she asked, in tones of fear.

"No—dogs," muttered the driver, without looking round, and taking a firmer hold of the reins.

"Strange-looking dogs!" thought Eleonore. "They surely cannot be wolves? Scherban would not allow his mother to travel alone, but he said nothing of wolves."

"Are those really dogs?" she asked aloud, when she found they were nearing the wood.

"Dogs; yes, dogs;" said the driver. Then the sledge halted for a moment, and a dark figure sprang in, with the question:

"Can you rely on your horses?"

"They fly like dragons," was the answer.

Eleonore nestled against Mihai, who, however, had no time to look at her, but kept his eyes fixed on the borders of the wood, where the dogs were fast gathering in larger and larger numbers. Then the moon arose and spread its glorious silvery light over wood and field; the plain was one sheet of snow, which here and there rose and sank in gentle undulations; the wood seemed a magic glittering cathedral, the tracery of whose delicate architecture, composed of millions of crystalline spires, told out sharp and clear against the moonlit heavens. Now they were

driving into the heart of this shrine, into the ghostly shadow of the beeches and oaks, and in another moment they were surrounded by a pack of howling animals.

"Wolves!" cried Eleonore, and clung to Mihai's arm.

"Let me go!" he cried, in a harsh voice, such as she had never heard from him before. "Drive, coachman—drive like the Devil!"

The driver slashed his horses, which at other times never felt the whip, and they tore along like a whirlwind. Mihai brought out a revolver from under his cloak, and shot one among the wolves; at once they set to work to devour their fallen comrade. There were, however, too many of them; keeping close to the sledge, they tore along behind it. Had a horse but slipped or fallen, every one of the party would have been lost. Mihai shot again, loaded quickly, and shot for the third time. Then, for the first time, their followers became frightened and remained behind. When at last Mihai turned round to look after Eleonore, she lay in a deep swoon, and, with a curse on his lips, he began to pommel and shake her until she came to herself.

Not yet fully conscious, she murmured :

“ ‘Green eyes go to hell.’ The Devil has got me, and we are driving to hell.”

“ Eleonore, don’t talk so! It is heaven we are driving to, child—to the beautiful South, to roses and oranges, to sunshine and love! And,” he added to himself, “to the Casino at Monaco.”

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Scherban was leaning against a column in a corner of the brilliantly illuminated ball-room, and looked with pleasure at the throng of beautiful women, at the charming toilettes, and at the graceful motions of the dancers. A ball in Bucharest may be—and more especially at that period, might be—counted among the fairest sights to be seen anywhere. It was a perfect galaxy of charming women, who united Parisian taste in dress with Oriental feeling for colour, and the most refined culture with the keenest natural wit. Strangers, when they enter a ball-room in Jassy or Bucharest, are fairly dazzled. It must be remembered that the Roumanians are by nature keen lovers of dancing : their artistic sense and their vivacious feeling alike find full satisfaction in the dance and all rhythmic measure.

Linza flitted past Scherban, dressed in yellow crape that seemed to impart a glow—almost the glow of the sunshine itself—to her dark skin. Her eyes sparkled and glittered, and the little curls on her forehead seemed to curl more than ever, like little seductive serpents. Her tiny feet scarcely touched the ground, and as she was soon universally recognised as a first-rate dancer, she flew from arm to arm, until at last she begged for a few minutes' rest. Round dances, it may be as well to explain, are never, in Roumania, danced with one and the same partner.

Zoe looked like a queen, standing there in her white dress, with white roses in her hair, and as she talked with the persons who were introduced to her she had an inimitable air of dignity and high breeding. Her shapely head, with its coils of blue-black hair, smoothly braided in front, and resting in a heavy knot at the back of the neck, was carried in such a graceful and peerless fashion that Scherban overheard people asking: “Do tell me who is that noble-looking girl yonder, the latest beauty?”

Once she turned her large eyes on her brother and smiled at him, and then she looked more beautiful than ever. Her own mother was astonished; she

had always known her child to be good and noble, but it needed a new environment to reveal to her Zoe's beauty.

"If only Eleonore was here!" said Scherban to himself. "She would be the most beautiful of all."

"I wonder where Mihai can be?" thought Frau Pulcheria, and let her eyes wander over the ball-room. At that moment Frau Sabine came up to her.

"How charming your daughters look! I must congratulate you. What a pity Eleonore is not here! We should then have really had the Three Graces. And my nephew Mihai is not here either: he's gone wolf-hunting; not even this long-desired ball had power to detain him. How well he and Zoe would have looked together, both so tall and graceful! What a pity! what a pity!"

This tirade was not at all pleasing to Frau Pulcheria. Was it possible that Frau Sabine had designs on her daughter, thinking perhaps thus to fill Mihai's empty purse?

In the same moment Scherban overheard someone at the other side of the column against which he was leaning utter the word, "Mihai," and the speaker was



talking in such loud tones that he could hear every word distinctly. And what he heard froze the blood in his veins and left lips and face colourless.

“Where is Mihai this evening?”

“He’s gone wolf-hunting.”

“Ah, bah! wolf-hunting, when one has a chance of dancing.”

“Yes, indeed; it does not look much like Mihai.”

“Ah, well! I know the sort of wolves Mihai is likely to be after.”

“Aha! Is he hunting some special game, then, at the present moment?”

“Of course! Just now there is a talk of a certain beautiful Eleonore, daughter-in-law of the stately dame yonder. It seems Mihai is quite off his head.”

“Is she beautiful?”

“Oh, of course—beautiful as sin itself. And it seems she has a most wonderful history: she is said to have sold herself to the Devil.”

“To the Devil! And thereupon Mihai appeared?”

“Perhaps. It appears the nuns in Sacré Cœur had placed her in solitary confinement; she wrote her name on the wall in her own blood, called on the Devil, and thereupon appeared—”

"His Dark Highness in person?"

"No—a nun—who came to announce Eleonore's aunt and her own departure from the convent."

"And the aunt, I suppose, had a husband ready?"

"Oh, of course—the husband and the husband's friend. She introduced both to the young girl in the same moment, this clever aunt. You must know that if the two men are placed close together there is no sort of doubt which of the two is most likely to captivate a young woman."

"But from whom did you hear all this?"

"Why, from Mihai himself, of course. He also gave me to understand—well—you can guess what I mean!"

"The rogue! he is always lucky!"

Scherban leant more and more heavily against the column, almost as though he himself were turned into stone. His eyes were distended and vacant, like those of some animal dying a torturous death; his lips were tightly compressed as though to keep back the cry that the heart longed to set forth; his nostrils were dilated, but remained motionless as though every effort to breathe had ceased. He no longer heard the intoxicating sounds of the music, no longer saw the

figures of the dancers as they glided to and fro in the mazes of the quadrille, happily hiding him from his mother's eyes ; he had no longer any consciousness of where he was. For the moment the only sensation that he could realise was that of every particle of his body being steeped in pain—such intolerable, maddening pain as he had never imagined possible, and as though his brain were about to burst through his skull, as though another deadly wound were bleeding at his breast.

When, all at once it seemed to him as if, in the far, far distance, he could hear a rushing, roaring noise, as of the sea. He failed to realise where he was, until at last it seemed to him that from amid the raging tumult of sound he could distinguish a voice, saying to him :—

“Are you ill, Scherban ?”

Slowly he turned his vacant eyes in the direction of the voice. It belonged to Linza, whose sharp eyes never let anything escape them. He did not, however, in the least understand what it was she had said to him.

“But, Sherban, what is the matter with you ?”

“With me ?” His voice sounded hoarse and strange :

it seemed to him as though not he, but someone else were speaking.

"You are so deathly pale."

"Tell mother I am obliged to return home, but she's not to be anxious about me. I have just heard that my wife is not well, and so I want to get to Boldeni as quickly as possible."

He drew himself up to his full height, strengthened by the resolve not to allow the world to see the death-wound he had just received. With weary footsteps he descended the stairs and sought his sledge.

The temperature had risen slightly, and the snow had begun to fall thick and fast, in large flakes, as though shreds torn by the wind from handkerchiefs and banners were falling slowly to the ground. Scherban drove through the streets, still brilliantly illuminated. Passengers on foot and in sledges were hurrying to various social gatherings, a stream of people were pouring out of the theatre: after the peaceful busy months of summer passed in the country, or a residence in some foreign watering-place, everyone seemed bent on pleasure.

He paid a hurried visit to his hotel, and put some necessaries into his hand-bag; then he examined and

loaded his revolver, which he put in his pocket; and, while waiting for postillion and sledge, wrote a few lines to his sister Zoe, telling her not to have any anxiety on his account. Eleonore, he wrote, had sent him word that she was not very well; Zoe should soon have a letter from him.

Then for some time his head remained buried in his hands, his pen idle; at last he wrote a few lines which he placed in his breast pocket, wrapped himself in his fur-lined coat, pressed his fur cap over his eyes, so as to protect them from wind and snow, and got into his sledge. There was only one postillion in attendance.

"It will be impossible to get another postillion at such short notice, but these four horses are said to run as fast as eight ordinary ones," said the servant.

The man was about to take the box-seat, when Scherban stopped him and begged him to remain behind with his mother.

"But I am afraid we are going to have a snow-storm: the snowflakes are becoming finer and smaller, and the wind has risen."

"That's of no consequence, as long as the postillion knows the way."

A cry from the postillion to his horses, a crack of

the whip, and away they sped to the sound of merry bells; past houses whose windows sparkled and beamed with the gay lights within, past brilliantly illuminated shops, past streams of hurrying men and women.

Then they were rushing through streets that were quieter and more or less deserted, then by smaller houses, and along alleys almost in total darkness, until at last they were out in the open country. A violent gust of wind swept the plains. The horses raised their heads and snorted, then bowed them low and started off at a furious gallop. The postillion also kept his head bent forwards, so that his eyes might not be blinded by the snow which became every moment finer and more penetrating.

Scherban allowed his gaze to sweep over the far distance: there was nothing to be seen but black Night in her white robe. One could not see the snowstorm—one only felt encompassed by it.

Higher and higher rose the wind, finer and finer became the driving flakes—now like fine needles, again like drifting sand, driving hard into eyes, face, and ears, encircling the throat, blinding the vision, until the entire body smarted under the lash of the pitiless downpour. In a few hours the tumult and

turmoil of the storm were such that the flakes began to whirl in circles, a perfect vortex, above, below, around, and about, in and around all at the same time. The horses threw back their heads, and vainly turned to the left, to escape the biting northern blast, which beset them on every hand.

Scherban paid but little heed to what was passing around him. He kept his hand on his pistol, and pictured to himself, as though in delirium, how he would shoot the two lovers, and then himself. His revolver had six bullets, and there was not likely to be any question of mercy. Just about daybreak, at which hour he hoped to reach Boldeni, he would enter her chamber and shoot her dead as she lay in her bed. He pictured to himself her terror, her piteous entreaties, her beauty; but the thought of all this only served to strengthen his resolve.

The wind blew in wild and sudden gusts. The postillion had lost all trace of a road or of any definite landmark; the horses plunged more and more to the left; the snow whirled in eddying circles round them, enveloping feet and face and chest; the postillion was obliged to close his eyes repeatedly in order to melt the minute icicles that prevented him

from seeing. Deeper and deeper grew the white drifts, the horses' hoofs fell on them with a hollow thud, and ever and anon they sank kneedeep into the yawning quicksands of snow.

"And if she protests her innocence?" Scherban thought; "and I do not find the rascal with her?—My mother knew of it! My mother was stern and strict with her because she knew everything—but she tried to spare me because she realised that this would be my death. Poor, poor mother!—Him first, and then her! And if she speaks to me of the child? Shall I murder the child that she is bearing next her heart? Pah! the child—better for it to die; it shall never be born. Better for it to be devoured by wolves than to come into the world with the brand of sin on its brow!"

The horses were travelling in a wide circle; every moment the continuously falling showers effaced all trace of a road, but this fact was scarcely observed; they panted to an alarming degree, and the lanterns burnt more and more dimly, until at length the glasses were completely frozen over. Already Scherban and the postillion had snow-white hair and beards, and the horses were festooned with icicles that clung to

collar and mane ; still they continued to press forward courageously. Every now and again they fell, buried up to their necks in a snowdrift, but struggled through it, encouraged by the cheering cries of the postillion ahead.

"Sir," he said at last, "I am afraid we have lost our way—there is no longer any trace of a road."

With a start, Scherban stopped short in his soliloquy; then, for the first time, became aware of the raging tempest, of the whirling, blinding storm.

"Drive up to a haystack, if you can ; then we can kindle a fire."

The postillion sought for some object that was a little upraised above the flat unbroken level of the surrounding country, and at last found something that might possibly be a haystack. Scherban took the reins, the postillion cleared away the snow, and began to twist the hay into a rope ; when he had made this of sufficient thickness, he set it afire and endeavoured by its light to find the road, and after a few minutes' search thought that he actually had found it ; then he set the entire haystack on fire with his torch, sprang into the sledge and again took the reins.

The wind flung hay and flames into the air like sky-rockets, and sent them whirling with frantic rapidity over the plain, a commingled vortex of finely-powdered snow and showers of flashing, scintillating sparks. All to no purpose ; still blacker grew the night and more and more impracticable the road. All at once the leader stumbled into a pitfall which the snow had completely levelled over, the postillion swore, and, up to his neck in snow, declared :—

“Sir, the horse has broken his leg !”

Scherban sprang out and examined the horse ; then drew his revolver and shot it dead. The other appeared unhurt, but incapable of pushing forwards ; he was unharnessed and allowed to lie where he fell.

“Onward !” cried Scherban ; then jumped back into the sledge. “Five shots remain,” he muttered ; “still five—that suffices.”

The road became more and more impassable, the wind howled louder and louder, now and again with a sound like rattling shot, again like a tornado of sand in a desert. They continued their journey with two tired horses, but at a slower pace.

The postillion began to lose heart. Scherban, however, was far from perceiving any danger. The

snowdrifts became such mountains that every moment the horses sank neckdeep into the abyss. The sledge gave a lurch and the axles gave way. The driver searched in the sledge-box and found the wherewith to mend the broken joist, but with his stiff fingers it was a very difficult task. The horses snorted, trembled and panted, and the next step in advance both fell.

"Sir," said the postillion, "for to-night we cannot advance farther. Let us turn round the sledge and shelter ourselves from the wind, so as not to freeze to death."

Scherban looked at him in absolute wonder. He murmured slowly:—

"Freeze to death?"

It was just as if these words brought him into a new train of thought. A strange peace stole over him. They put the horses in shelter from the wind and dragged the sledge to one side, spread the carriage rugs upon the snow, and lay down upon them. An intense weariness came creeping on apace, so gentle, so still, it was as if hot thoughts of revenge were all slowly dispersing. The postillion had brought some brandy with him, which they drank

in silence ; the horses sucked up the very snow from thirst, and began drowsily to blink their eyes.

Scherban thought that were he to fall asleep here, it would be the end of all misery—and thus none other would be doomed to death. He could not understand how it happened that such a thought had not sooner occurred to him. His death would free both from sin and despair. How selfish he had been in his sorrow ! Why had he not realised from the beginning that he ought to withdraw and leave the coast clear for the handsomer, more captivating man ? An infinite peace stole over his spirit.

“ Be happy, my child that is to come ; I bless thee,” he murmured, half aloud, half smiling ; “ and thou, poor mother, shalt not have an assassin for thy son.” His thoughts grew more and more tranquil ; he no longer heard the raging storm ; a comforting sense of warmth encompassed him, as the snow, quicker and faster, heaped itself up as though it would ultimately enshroud him ; as though it would protect him from the last final agony, and preserve him in purity, goodness, and guiltlessness.

Then a beautiful dream came to him : he saw Eleonore place a lovely child in his mother’s arms,

and his mother took the child to her heart, and named it Scherban. And after that he knew no more.

The storm raged on, piling the drifts high on men and horses, until only the faint outlines of the sledge were visible above the white surface.

By daybreak even these had disappeared.

For three days, night and day, the storm continued with unabated fury, as though the entire heavens were dissolving in snow: it was as if every wind had flown from Siberia to bleat over the Black Sea and freeze the flowing Danube. Far and wide, nothing could be seen but snow, everywhere snow, as though the sun had no longer any power to thaw. The heavens, in masses of dark grey, overhung and fretted the vast white cerements below. Men, women, beasts, and vehicles were overwhelmed before the very gates of Bucharest; the suburban villas were quite blotted out with the deathly pall; even the chimney-stacks were almost entirely obliterated, and the wolves came howling up to the very portals of the city. Long trains of peasant sledges were seen laden with wood, and many a young forest was sacrificed in its prime, never again to rejoice in spring days or summer sunlight.

## CHAPTER II.

“MOTHER,” said Linza, “someone is going to die. The sacred image has just cracked ; I heard it.”

Frau Pulcheria grew very uneasy when, although the snowstorm was over, she still received no news of her son. She sent a messenger to Boldeni : he did not return until after a lapse of several days, when he came accompanied by the old steward. With drooping head, his fur cap in his hand, the old servant entered Frau Pulcheria’s room ; he brought with him a perfect stream of cold air, for it was freezing hard outside.

“Did my son send you ?” she asked, going up to the old man in an excited, eager way.

The fur cap trembled in the old man’s hands.

“I can’t exactly say that he sent me. I came of mine own accord.”

“Is he ill then ?”

“I am afraid he is not very well.”

"What is the matter with him? Did you send for a doctor? Why did you not come sooner?"

"Because at first we had no idea that the master was expected, seeing that the young mistress had left the house."

A look, almost of perplexity, came into Frau Pulcheria's large eyes.

"My daughter-in-law had left the house, you say! When did she go, and where was she going?"

"We thought, of course, she must be coming here. She drove away, quite alone, in a sledge."

"And after that you sent word to your master?"

"No; I thought that of course she had come here."

The fur cap trembled more and more.

"And afterwards my son came to the house and found her gone?"

"No; he never came."

"Ah, what do you say?" The strong woman tottered, and caught at an armchair for support.

"We had no idea that he was travelling to Boldeni in the snowstorm until your messenger arrived, and then we sought for him night and day, with dogs and torches—and at last we found him."

Frau Pulcheria gave a deep groan, and fell back in a swoon.

The old man wrung his hands in despair, knelt down beside his mistress, rubbed her hands, tried to raise her head, and finally ran out of the room to seek for help. He found Zoe, who rushed into the room at the sound of his cries, and for a long time sought in vain to restore her mother to consciousness. The deathlike swoon seemed as though it would indeed become the sleep of death.

“What have you told her?” asked Zoe, but she received no answer. Linza came into the room, followed by the women-servants; the latter were in tears, the messenger having told them everything.

Linza fell on her mother’s neck, sobbing violently.

“Don’t make such a pretence,” said Zoe sternly. Then she looked up, and saw that everyone was sobbing.

“What are you all crying for?” she asked, and began to tremble violently.

“Scherban! ah, Scherban is dead!” cried Linza, in tones of despair.

At the sound of this name Frau Pulcheria opened her eyes, and allowed her gaze to rest in turn on each

member of the little circle, as though she were trying to comprehend. When her eyes fell on the old steward, she seemed about to go off into another swoon, but every means were tried to prevent her from once more losing consciousness. At length she gave a deep sigh, and the tears slowly trickled down her pale cheeks.

When mother and sisters arrived at the old home, Scherban, lying in his coffin, appeared to them like an image of peace. The priest stood at the foot of the bier, murmuring the customary prayers, while the numerous lights burning in the chamber cast a roseate glow over the calm, pale face.

Frau Pulcheria fell prone on her son's body and remained lying there a long, long while, as though she would warm him into life. When at last she arose, the old steward handed her a paper, saying:—

“We found this in his breast pocket, and,” he added, “this in his hand;” and he placed Scherban’s revolver on the table.

With trembling hands Frau Pulcheria opened the letter and read:—

“Do not weep for me, mother! I have heard of my wife’s infidelity, and cannot survive the know-

ledge. It must have been well known to you, and it was for this that your blessed lips uttered their first falsehood. For this I thank you, mother, from the very depths of my soul, for by this act you preserved to me, for a short time, my happiness and peace of mind. Forgive me for having, in my passionate vehemence, required such a sacrifice on your part. I am on my way to murder my fair young wife and then to kill myself. Pardon me, mother, and pray for my soul."

Frau Pulcheria kissed the letter with trembling, burning lips, and hid it in her breast, without betraying its contents to anyone.

### CHAPTER III.

Two years had passed since the night of the ball at Bucharest. One day a carriage drove up to the gates of Morineni. Immediately several curious faces peered from the windows, for since the terrible misfortune that had happened two years ago, it had been very quiet in the great house, and the owners had been absent the major portion of the year.

In the carriage sat a lady with pale face and eyes of infinite sadness, and on her lap a lovely little boy with eyes of greyish green, black eyelashes, and a shower of golden curls. He looked like a tiny cherub when he smiled, showing his little white teeth, and at that very moment he was smiling at a dove which flew past him.

A servant came to the door of the carriage.

“Is Frau Sabine at home?” asked the strange lady. The servant stared her in the face, fancying that he recognised her.

"Yes, I believe so ; I will go and see."

The lady wrote on a piece of paper : "Eleonore."

"Give her that," she said.

A long, long time elapsed before the servant appeared again. At last he came out of the house, shut the hall door behind him, and said, stiffly and coldly :—"Not at home."

Eleonore pressed the child's sunny head to her lips.

"Drive on," she said to the coachman ; "to the right, through the avenue."

The servant hastened to the kitchen, related there what had happened, and expressed his most extreme surprise that Eleonore should have chosen the road leading to Boldeni.

Eleonore stopped the carriage at the steward's lodge, paid the coachman his fare, and dismissed him. Then she entered the lodge. The old man started as though he had seen a ghost.

"Please," said Eleonore, "for pity's sake, a drop of milk for my child—it is parched with thirst."

Then she sank upon a chair.

The old man fetched some milk without saying a word, and then remained standing in front of her, gazing at her with a troubled face.

“I wish to see Frau Pulcheria ; will you help me ?” she said at last.

“You wish to see my mistress ?”

“I would have gone to one of the young ladies had I not heard that they are both married, and have left this neighbourhood. Now there is no one but her to whom I can go.”

The old steward shook his head.

“That will be a difficult matter.”

“Then I will go to her alone !” and, snatching her child up with a gesture of despair, she ran out of the lodge in the direction of the manor. There she found a servant to whom she was unknown, and begged him to request Frau Pulcheria to come to the hall-door for a moment, as someone was standing without who wished to speak with her.

In the course of a few moments Frau Pulcheria appeared, still upright and stately, but with hair prematurely bleached, her black draperies giving her somewhat the appearance of an abbess.

Eleonore fell on her knees, and, holding out the child towards her, said :—

“Oh, I entreat you, for God’s sake, protect my child ! They want to take it from me, after having brought

me to beggary ! Oh, take my child, I implore you ! ”

“ And you come to me ? ” asked Frau Pulcheria’s sonorous voice.

“ I know well that I have no right to come to you, but I have been sent away from other doors as though I were a beggar. Oh pray, pray, pray protect my child ! ”

“ Whose child is it ? ” asked Frau Pulcheria.

Eleonore bowed her head over the little neck.

“ The thought that this child would soon be born to us used to make him so happy ! ” she whispered, “ and he said that it should be called Dan.”

Frau Pulcheria took something sewn up in a silken handkerchief from the pocket of her dress ; she tore the stitches asunder, and handed to Eleonore Scherban’s last letter.

Eleonore read it at a glance, and gave it back with trembling hand.

“ Ah ! ” she cried, “ had he but killed me ! —it would have been a far happier fate ! Ah, had he but preserved me thus from shame and misery ! Oh, my God ! what indescribable wretchedness I have suffered ! what barbarity and ill-usage ! I have been treated

worse than one treats the meanest girl who walks the streets ! I have been in hell ! and now he wants to take my child, and to make it as bad as he is himself ! Oh, mother ! take my child and train it so that it may resemble your son ! I am not worthy to have charge of it ! Let me be driven with stripes from your door, as you once threatened—I will suffer it without one word of complaint—only, protect my child ; train him to be a man, and never say a word to him of his mother. Let him think that you are his mother ; and then he will become as good and noble as was Scherban. As for me, not a trace shall remain of my existence ! Never fear that I shall ever again appear before you — I, who murdered him ! Oh, mother, take my child ! ”

Frau Pulcheria bent low, and lifting the child from Eleonore’s arms, took her hand and assisted her to rise. Then she said :—

“ Come within, and remain for evermore with me.”

In the garden rare nightingales sing hymns to the goodness of God, and happy swallows, rejoicing, circle round the house into which peace has at last entered.

IN FETTERS.



# IN FETTERS.

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## CHAPTER I.

ISLE OF WIGHT, MADEIRA VALE.

*March 10th, 18—.*

God forgive me, I am married ! It was wicked of me, but I imagined it possible to take such a step, as one might conclude an amicable and peaceable treaty of friendship, without thereby selling my soul to the Devil. Never for one moment had I any thought of love in the matter, and now to my horror I find that my wife is in love with me ! It is enough to drive one mad. Nora loves me ! Had I only known this, I would never have married her. Now I am a liar, a perjured creature ; I loathe myself, I despise myself, I long to put an end to my existence. She loves me. Ye gods ! I shall go mad.

It seems that she fell in love with my poems long

before she saw me, and now she gazes at me with her large eyes, and questions me as only love can question. But there is no such love as hers in my heart. And there never will be any such. My mother is happy beyond measure at having at last succeeded in caging her wild bird-of-passage. If she only knew what she has done ! Even my songs have died in me.

*March 13th.*—It is my honeymoon, and I am living in a sort of earthly Paradise. My misfortune is that this is neither my first honeymoon nor my first Paradise. Nora likes to follow me wherever I go : to sit with me amongst the violets, sail with me in my boat—I am never permitted to be alone. She talks incessantly, and always looks into my eyes while she is speaking, so that I am forced to listen to her. I must put an end to my life. At every loving kiss, at every word of love, my heart withers. In all my existence I have never before uttered so many falsehoods ; for when I really did love I believed in that love, and never imagined it possible that my feelings could undergo any change. Hence in those days I never lied. But now I have become a liar. With the next high tide I shall go bathing and drown myself.

*March 15th.*— But the tide refused to engulf me—I am still here. How, then, did it come about that I did not drown and die as I intended? Something—I am not quite clear as to what it was—drew me back to shore. Nora is so overjoyed at having me with her again, alive and safe, that she overwhelms me with tenderness. She was most terrified, poor little thing, imagining, as she did for a moment, that I had perished beneath the black, surging waves. Above the roar of storm and tide I could hear her wild cry of despair, and once I looked towards her and saw her stretching out her arms towards me. Oh, horror! I am still living! I live because her will forces me to live. This discovery maddens me. She actually will not permit me to die. Her love gives her power over me. I feel this, and yet I am unable to defend myself. I live under the spell of her eyes. She never asks, “Do you love me?” If she did I should answer her quite rudely, “No!” Why does she not ask?

She is not even jealous. She is so sure that she is the climax of all my loves that she insists on my constantly repeating it to her, and she is always teasing me to tell her about love passages in my past

life. Sometimes it almost seems as though she wished to inflict innumerable little wounds on herself, in order to test her happiness, and then she begins to put questions to me about my former love affairs.

At first I was shy and answered her cautiously and hesitatingly. But now I have become utterly savage and pitiless; I wound her whenever I can, and as often as I can, as though I longed to avenge myself on her for having me so utterly in her power. She never winces and never grows angry, but remains perfectly quiet under my stabs, and smiles up in my face as though with something of a victor's joy at having me in fetters. If she would only doubt my love for her! It would be my salvation. But no, I am her creature. She calls me, "My master," kisses my hand, and appears to have no will of her own. In spite of this apparent submission, however, she has a will of iron, by dint of which she has made of me her humble slave and subject; so that I lie, as it were, bound and captive at her feet. If we were but at home, then I might lock myself into my study, and once there her power over me would cease. With a revolver, there it might be possible to put an end to my life.



Reclining on my soft pillow, I dreamed again all my day-dreams, when suddenly it seemed that a pistol-shot actually rang through my brain, bringing me back to the consciousness of night and of my tormenting thoughts.

*March 18th.*—To-day I spoke of our return journey, when she nestled up to me and said :—

“As you like, but I am so frightened ! Once among your own people, something of you will be lost to me ! Here you belong to me, and to me alone. I have no fear of the sea ; it was powerless to tear you from me. But your home is stronger than I ! Do remain here just a little longer !”

And of course I remained.

“Will you not write a beautiful song ?” she asked me. “Here are pencil and paper, and I have hired a piano, so that you can sing me your song as you write it.”

In that moment I became aware that she has even killed in me my power of song. She seems to think that songs can be made to order. But a poet’s songs sing themselves into his brain, as it were, and if they do not come to him thus, they are no songs, and he is no poet.

I laughed loud and bitterly.

"I do not need my songs any more," I said.

"But *I* need them; otherwise I cannot tell whether you are happy or not."

"Foolish child! It was just when I was most sorrowful, sorrowful even unto death, that I wrote my songs."

"This morning, from ten till half-past eleven, you looked so sorrowful that I felt nearly sure you must be composing a song. I have not grieved you or vexed you, have I?"

Good God! An hour and a half! She has actually been timing me by the clock to see how long I remain in low spirits. So that at times when other women would fall to weeping or grumbling, she will in the future bring pencil and paper, and say, "Write a song!" I could laugh aloud! By no possible method could she more effectually destroy and crush the artist and the poet within me. She has penetrated into my last place of refuge. There is now no solitude for me anywhere; not even with my pen can I be alone. Yesterday she looked over my manuscripts, and wanted me to give her the exact history of them all—to lay my inmost soul bare for her inspection.

I told her all sorts of wild and extravagant nonsense, until at last she looked full at me with those large eyes of hers, and said :—

“ Why won’t you tell me the truth ? I can bear it very well. Or are you afraid that I shall not care for your poems any more ? ”

“ But, indeed, I have almost forgotten the origin and history of all these thoughts and fancies. Such things come of their own accord, spontaneously : one sings as birds sing, or not at all.”

She looked at me searchingly.

“ And rhyme, does that also come spontaneously ? ”

“ Of course ! How could it come otherwise ? ”

“ I have never in all my life been able to compose one single verse of poetry ! ”

Now she will begin to dissect me alive. For she is very thorough in all she does. She will search out and carefully analyse the thoughts that have inspired my poems. It is just as though she were to try to comprehend the wind, or the ebb and flow of the tide. “ *Why?* ” she asks. Everyone who is not himself a poet will persist in asking, “ *Why?* ”

*March 20th.*—This place grows daily more beautiful. Our rose-decked cottage is enveloped as it were in

clouds of fragrance. Last night I arose softly, and threw myself on the grass outside. I thought of a certain night in Sorrento, and the tears fell. How beautiful she was, my Lavinia ! She was like some lovely, stately goddess ; and indeed, she was my goddess, my star, my everything. How can I adequately describe her ; how satisfy my own feelings in doing so ? Into what magic tints shall I dip my brush in order to bring her back to me ; as by enchantment, bring her back in all her brilliant glowing loveliness ? She was born in the South of France, and had Arabian blood in her veins ; she had a creamy skin with a peach-like bloom, large dark eyes, luxuriant hair of a bluish-black, lips of coral red, wonderful little teeth, a classic nose, with transparent, incessantly quivering nostrils, and one dark spot under the left eye, set there, as it were, but to enhance the fairness of her beauty.

But what is description in comparison with reality ? I should like to erase every word that I have written, to tear in pieces the page that looks back at me so coldly. It seems to me as though I saw her coming towards me in all her slender grace and stately repose ; as though I could hear the sound of her deep, tender

voice ; as though once again I felt compelled to whisper, "Lavinia ! "

My mother would not hear of making her my wife, my superb Arabian. I could scarcely, however, have been more unhappy with her than I am at present. I should have taken her to my estate, and have kept her a close prisoner there, and not allowed any human creature to come near her. Possibly I should have tormented her to death with jealousy and suspicion, but she would nevertheless have belonged to me, and I should have been able to preserve her from shame and misery. I would have loved her madly, but at the same time I would have protected her, and—

*March 21st.*—"Come, Ewald ! Let us drive to Shanklin Chine and see the waterfall."

Like the icy breath of an east wind, the voice of my young wife struck with a sudden chill into the heated atmosphere of my glowing and excited feelings. There was only just time to hastily secrete the words I had written. Her large grey eyes had, however, perceived the manuscript, and the finely formed nose took rather a sharp and downward curve.

"So you have been writing ? Why do you not show me what you write ?"

"I can never show anything unfinished. It is like being flayed alive."

"And I have been rejoicing in the thought of sharing your labours, of being your secretary."

"I am as shy in all that concerns my work as any schoolgirl, and as nervous as a violinist."

"I undertake to cure you of that. It is only because you have never yet had anyone in whom you could thoroughly confide."

I trembled with rage and impatience, but said, quite in a friendly tone :—

"Yes, dear heart!" and took my hat and left her.

The way in which she says "Ewald," with her English accent, is certainly charming, but nevertheless I am irritated by it. I think of the tender, loving tone in which Lavinia used to say, "Jannino," for she could never pronounce the word, "Hans." And then she used to look at me with her intoxicating eyes. Ah, Lavinia! how madly have I loved you. You would never have become bad, would you, had I remained near you? You were such a noble creature, my darling. I remember your perfect repose of manner, your majestic and dignified bearing, and the quiet way in which you used to slowly raise your eyes under the

proudly arched brows that seemed to rule the world. Who could have guessed that under this calm exterior you hid such a tumult of passionate feeling. I will tell your story calmly, as though I were someone else, and not a madman, plunging both hands into an old wound.

Lavinia was an orphan, and had been brought up in a convent. Her convent training might have had a far more injurious effect on her character than was actually the case, had not the convent been ruled by a woman of unusual ability. This woman deserved to have an entire book written about her, but I have only space here for a few details related to me by Lavinia.

She—the Mother Superior—was comparatively young, but under her nun's veil she hid hair that was snow-white, for in one and the same day she had lost father, husband, and five children, from an infectious disease, and, worst of all, she was tormented by remorse, because for a short space of time she had deprived those loved ones of her tender solicitude—had allowed her heart to dwell elsewhere. She imagined that only in the cloister would it be possible for her to atone for her sin, and to lighten her almost intolerable burden of remorse and sorrow. This woman was capable of

understanding a nature like that of Lavinia. The young girl had a great longing to take the veil, but the Lady Superior detected youthful exaltation, and felt that, lying in wait in the girl's nature, was enthusiasm of a far wilder and more passionate sort; hence, with extreme gentleness and mildness, she forbade her to take such a decisive step.

Perhaps her own experience had taught her how difficult it is to forego the satisfaction of passionate desires, and to stifle one's craving after the pleasures of heart and sense. She had weathered all the storms of life, and had not suffered shipwreck; she had seen all her loved ones die, and had not been turned to stone; but by these experiences she had gained an intimate knowledge of human character and human passion.

With many bitter tears Lavinia had torn herself from the arms of her friend, and had followed her sister and her sister's husband to Sorrento. It was there that I first made her acquaintance, having accompanied thither my mother and my invalid sister. In the very first moment of our meeting I fell under her spell. Not so my mother.

It was sunset; the evening was sweet with all

manner of fragrant odours. On a sudden I perceived Lavinia standing near us, gazing out over the sea. Her eyes seemed to catch and retain every ray of the golden tramonta.

At the sight of so much beauty I experienced a sudden thrill of sharp and subtle pain ; I felt as though impelled to rush towards her, and held my breath for fear that I might cause her to change her attitude. The spell was broken by my sister moving ; the stranger turned towards us, an expression of sympathy in her eyes that considerably enhanced their beauty. My sister told me afterwards that she was exquisitely dressed. I have not the slightest idea what was the fashion or colour of her garment ; I can remember only the subtle magic influence that seemed to stream from her towards me ; even now I can feel the warm glance of her almond eyes. I must have stared at her very intently, for all at once she blushed deeply and disappeared from the balcony. Of course I lost no time in making her acquaintance.

Her sister was short, inclined to embonpoint, vivacious, and much occupied with her baby daughter, whilst her brother-in-law seemed very much occupied with her—Lavinia. I often visited them in their

villa, where I soon became a welcome guest. My mother was not at all contented with the state of affairs. The girl, she said, was a thorough coquette, and allowed her brother-in-law to pay her attentions ; nothing would induce her to make her acquaintance or to have anything to do with her, &c.

One day I rode up to the villa and found it deserted. My heart stood still with despair and disappointment. I ran through all the rooms. Silence everywhere ; traces of hurried packing, and a certain disorder and confusion that I had never observed there before. I opened door after door—emptiness, solitude everywhere. Just as I was approaching a writing-table to see whether some word of farewell might not have been left there for me, I heard a light footstep slowly descending the stairs and entering the little ante-room that led into the garden, and there, in front of me, stood Lavinia, pale, like a wrathful angel, with lips tightly pressed together, and eyes whence all light had died away. She gazed at me in silence.

“Lavinia, dear Lavinia !” I cried.

But she drew back a step.

“Do you know what has happened ?” she said,

"and have you come to see me nevertheless, or do you know nothing?"

"In God's name, tell me—has any misfortune befallen this house?"

"So you know nothing. That is just what I imagined; otherwise you would never have come!"

"But tell me, what has happened?"

"My sister has gone away quite suddenly and unexpectedly with her child," said the young girl, in a deep, joyless voice, "because she imagined—because she imagined that her husband and I—" She could say no more, but covered her face with her hands.

"And she has left you, poor child, exposed to public scandal and gossip? Oh, how cruel!"

"My brother-in-law at once set off in search of her, and I remain here," she said, letting head and arms sink like someone, who, being accused of a crime, does not care to make any defence, because he well knows that appearances are against him.

"But you surely do not imagine, Lavinia, that I shall give any credence whatever to these abominable scandals? Does it not occur to you that I am likely to treat you with even greater respect and considera

tion than usual, just because you are solitary and forsaken? Surely you do not think so meanly of me, Lavinia?"

Still she hung her head despondently, while the sunbeams, passing through the half-opened garden door, played and glimmered in her shining hair.

"Leave me," she said; "I must bear my fate alone!" and, bursting into tears, she sank upon a couch. What I thereupon said to her is so much a matter of course that I scarcely need relate it here. I spoke to her of my ardent love, assured her that in her present forsaken and desolate situation I should regard her as a sacred being, and that she need not have the slightest fear of me; in fact, I said everything that an honourable and upright man would be likely to say at such a time. Ah, how wonderfully sweet it was to see that superbly beautiful woman revive under the influence of my love—she who but a moment before had imagined herself to be despised and abandoned by all. Every one of her servants, with the exception of one old faithful negress, had forsaken her.

I was obliged to talk to her long and earnestly before she would either believe in or trust me.

Every now and then she was overcome by sensations of mingled shyness and terror, and she seemed unable to struggle against the conviction that she must necessarily remain from henceforward and for ever a disgraced and branded creature.

I could not endure to see my sublime and stately goddess so utterly crushed and broken-hearted. In quite paternal fashion, I laid my hand on her head; she, however, trembled so violently at my touch that I withdrew my hand. My feelings at that moment resembled those of some youthful priest who has inadvertently laid profane hands on the sacred amphoræ.

From that time forward I used to ride over every day to visit Lavinia in her solitude, and I found her full of courage, strength of mind, and resolution. Likewise she had absolutely no fear of robbers, and although she had no other protection than her old negress, a gardener's boy, and two pistols, was not afraid to live alone.

Owing to my sister's failing health, it was some time before my mother came to hear of the misfortune that had befallen Lavinia. But when she did hear of it—ah! that was a terrible hour for me.

She assured me that if I wished to bring her speedily to her grave, the best thing I could do would be to marry this girl.

"I would far rather," she said, "see you married to a servant-maid—to any honest girl—rather than to one at whom the fingers of all the world are pointed in scorn."

A few days later she informed me that the doctors were uneasy about the state of my sister's health, that they considered the air of Sorrento not sufficiently warm for her, and recommended Egypt. I did not believe her for a moment, for I was quite beside myself with rage, and guessed that she had managed to win the doctors over to her side in order to be better able to separate me from Lavinia.

My final visit to Lavinia was an hour of terrible suffering, of almost mortal despair for us both. I dared not say to her, "Become my wife," and I was compelled to leave her alone in the world—in the very same world that had outlawed her, and had condemned her to solitude and abandonment as though she were a leper.

When I informed her that I was forced to leave her for awhile, she gazed at me long and searchingly.

"Of course, the meaning of this is that your mother, Jannino—your mother has heard all about me. You have been very imprudent. Your reputation might have suffered, you know."

How satirical and how bitter rang these words from her lips ! I assured her of my deep and unalterable love, but how was she to believe me, seeing that I never once spoke to her of the marriage tie ? My heart seemed all aglow and on fire.

## CHAPTER II.

*March 24th.*—“Lavinia! Who is she, I wonder?” said my wife, peering over my shoulder.

There was a moment’s silence, during which I hastily disarranged the leaves of my journal, before I was capable of a reply.

“Lavinia!—oh, merely a pretty girl whose acquaintance I once made, and whom I am going to utilise in my next novelette. I was just making a few rough notes, for fear that I might forget certain details.” Never once had I mentioned Lavinia to my wife.

“Why do you not tell me all about her, then? My memory is like a book, I never forget anything. Whatever you relate to me I immediately arrange in small compartments in my brain, and from this store you may obtain, *ad libitum*, as much and as often as you please. My brain is like a commodious cabinet

whose contents are carefully and methodically arranged in numerous tiny compartments."

I thought of Schumann's words : " Woman is chaos, but from this chaos the world is recreated."

Of what use to a poet is subject-matter taken from a cabinet where everything has its special compartment and its special number. Nora's passion for order and method frightens me out of my wits. Most assuredly she has already analysed and tabulated my character and disposition, and her cold eyes have studied me carefully and critically, anxious not to overlook the most insignificant minutiae. At the same time, she is not without a certain kind of refined taste, and is, in a certain sense, a connoisseur in art and antiquities. We visited lately some of the old curiosity shops in London. She was most prompt and accurate in detecting at the first glance what was really antique, and what mere imitation, and she took such a long time bartering and bargaining that at last I whispered softly, " But, Nora, this is not ladylike." She merely laughed in reply, so that I left the shop and walked up and down in front of the door, until at length she came out and joined me, her face beaming with pleasure and satisfaction as she took my arm.

"Surely you are not displeased?" she said.

"How is it possible not to be displeased?" I replied.  
"Am I not rich enough to gratify each and every one  
of your whims, even if you wished to buy up the  
whole shop. But this bargaining is hateful to me."

"Ah, I am beginning to see that I shall just do  
for your business factotum and general manager," she  
said, laughing.

And she has kept her word. She now takes charge  
of my banker's book, and keeps a careful and accurate  
account of all our expenditure. The next thing will  
be that she will refuse to allow me any money when  
I wish to spend what is my own.

To-day, instead of yesterday's fog, there is a cold,  
drizzling rain. That is just what Nora likes. She  
has begun her interminable letter-writing, after having  
first arranged all my watercolour and pencil sketches  
in most faultless and systematic order.

In doing this she brought to light a few studies of  
Sorrento that I thought to have destroyed long ago, and  
among them several which Lavinia had painted under  
my instructions. I imagined that by becoming her  
teacher I might help to make her life more endurable.  
But I soon found that she did more work when I was

not there, for when I came she used to lead me to a cool grotto in the shadiest and most secluded corner of the garden, and there she would often rest her beautiful head on the moist stones as she listened with slightly parted, smiling lips to my words of love. And then, suddenly, she would throw her arms around my neck, draw me towards her, but to take flight all in the same moment. Had she not been so utterly desolate and unprotected, I would not have allowed her to make her escape.

And when at length I told her that I must go away, she lay on my breast like a crushed flower.

“If you also abandon and forsake me, Jannino, I shall indeed feel that I am worthless, and have no longer any value for any one !”

“I shall return !”

She looked full into my eyes, and then she shook her head.

“You will never return !”

“I swear it !”

She tried to utter a cry of delight, but it changed into a kind of half-choked sob.

“If only I could hear you sing once more before I die !”

We sat talking under the starlit sky until the night was far advanced, but at last we were forced to separate. What is the use of describing moments like these? One has to live through them, but it is quite impossible to write about them. I rode away through that lovely starlit night like one in a dream, like one who is bidding eternal farewell to his better self and his life's happiness.

I found my mother sitting up, waiting for me.

"Do you still belong to me, or are you lost to me?" she asked.

"I still belong to you, but I am lost to you nevertheless," I answered, in a cold, harsh voice, and then locked myself into my room until the morning.

How can I describe the long, long months we spent upon the Nile; how write of the gently flickering, slowly dying flame of life in my sister; of the untiring patience and constant self-surrender of my mother, whose life at that time was certainly not made easier by my presence? She, however, never complained. I almost hated her in those days, and in my bitterness and despair I said many hard things to her. Once I cried:—

"Do you think that because you have given me life

you have therefore any right to crush and destroy that life in me?"

And my mother was silent.

My sister used to talk to me with a gentle sweetness that was almost angelic, as we sat on deck, our hands clasped in one another's, slowly sailing up the Nile. She was always entreating that we might go farther, and yet a little farther, and I used to imagine that this wish for constant change of scene was due to the restlessness of an invalid, until later I discovered that it was entirely for my sake; in order to give me distraction, and that she was suffering in those last weeks from burning homesickness, and would so gladly have gone home to die.

"Neither of us has as yet succeeded in making our mother happy," she whispered; "but you will still do this?"

"I, indeed!"

Soon afterwards she lay dead. Then, in mourning clothes and with heavy hearts, we returned home. I tried my very best to remain there and to be contented with my surroundings, but when autumn set in and winter was approaching, my longing after Sorrento became almost unbearable.

"Let me go, mother. I must go southwards; I cannot exist in the north."

"Very well, my son, I will go with you. I have a longing once more to see the places where my child stayed for a time while she still belonged to me. I know that I must be a burden to you, and yet I think you will have patience with me, out of pity for my sad aching heart."

The women who are dear to me seem predestined to be my fatality.

*March 27th.*—I had scarcely written the last words when my wife entered the room, asking me to look at the menu. Now the food question has always been my abomination. I positively detest the sight, and sound, and smell, and thought of eating. I have no tendency whatever towards gormandising, and am only too glad when the tedious business of drinking and feeding is at an end. I still live in the earnest hope that before I die some inventive genius may discover a means of swallowing all requisite nourishment in the form of pearls. My wife regards this feebleness of epicurean sense as a positive defect in my education. Every day I am obliged to go through the bill of fare with her, every day I see the same

things written down on it: soup, fish, meat, and so on—each and every one things that I eat with positive distaste, and of which the sight, and still more the thought, bore me to death. Like Byron, directly I see a woman eating whom I admire, she has lost all charm for me. Such a creature ought rightly to exist upon ether and dew. Sometimes I wonder whether my wife has any soul whatever, or whether she has merely appetite and memory. Moreover she is a walking encyclopædia, and constantly makes me blush on account of my growing ignorance. For I have no love of reading, and I read very little; I prefer essays to books, and human beings to biographies.

My wife writes a firm, large hand. When once she has affixed her signature, “Honoria Ewald,” to anything, be it merely a card of invitation, it looks like a legal document. She is never hasty or superficial in anything she does, nor does she ever betray any sign of weakness or of needing any assistance from others. She is always strong and self-sufficing, and able to stand on her own feet. These characteristics are, doubtless, a blessing to her. But I, for my part, far prefer gentle, tender womanliness, even very great weakness, imperfection—anything rather than this

eternal, imperturbable strong-mindedness. I have always been fond of Magdalenes—a taste that has been to me as an evil destiny.

So we went together to Sorrento. At first my mother would not permit me to leave her side, but insisted on my accompanying her to every spot that reminded her of my sister. At last, however, one day I found that I was free to go where I pleased. I hastened at once to the villa, but found no one there except the gardener's boy.

“Where is your mistress?” I asked.

“I don't know.”

“Where is the negress?”

“She is dead.”

“Dead! The negress?”

“The robbers killed her.”

“And your mistress?”

“She shot the robbers dead.”

“And afterwards?”

“After then she used to be always going out to sea.”

“And later?”

My God! I could have shaken him for his deliberate coolness and equanimity. But I feared that

if I showed any sign of anger, I might cause him to hold his tongue altogether.

"Was there no one here in those days besides your mistress?"

"Oh, yes, a gentleman used to come here."

"Do you mean your master?"

"No, a gentleman."

"Did he come often?"

"Yes, often."

"Who was he?"

"I don't know."

"And did he take her away with him?"

"No, he went away himself."

"He went away? Why, then? Who was he, then?"

"I don't know."

"Was he a native of this place?"

"He spoke Italian."

"What did she do after he had gone away?"

"She used to be always going out to sea."

The lad looked so knowing, in spite of all his stupid answers, that I could gladly have strangled him.

"And the last time she went to sea, did she go far away?"

"No, I believe not; I don't know."

"But, fellow, did she not give you orders of any kind? Did she say nothing to you?"

"She said nothing to me. She has gone away."

"But did you not make any search after her?"

"No, because I saw her go away."

"Rascal!" I cried, "tell me where she is gone."

"She is gone where she wishes no one to find her."

I grew hot and cold by turns.

"She is surely not under the sea?"

"No, she is not there."

"You need not say a word: only point with your hand in the direction in which she went."

He pointed in the direction of a monastery situated on a high cliff that overhung the sea.

"But she surely did not go to the monastery?"

"I don't know."

I wonder now how it was that I was able to refrain from throttling him. In despair at not being able to obtain any more certain information, and full of sad and bitter thoughts, I turned my course in the direction of the monastery. This time I resolved to be more cautious in my enquiries, and allowed my horse to walk leisurely up the steep, slippery path that led

to the sacred gates, in order to give myself time to plan what I had best say when I arrived there.

I begged the brother who acted as doorkeeper to show me the chapel and the library, and did my very best to make him talk. But he betrayed nothing. At length I asked to see the refectory.

“That is inhabited at present; you cannot see it.”

“Inhabited? Have you, then, some guest of high rank?”

“Ah, dear sir, not of very high rank, I assure you. A very poor guest, indeed!”

“You have a poor person in the refectory?”

“Not poor in worldly goods, but unfortunate, very unfortunate and wretched. The guest I speak of is a woman.”

My heart gave such a bound that I nearly choked.

“I am here in search of my sister. I entreat you, lead me to this lady!”

“In that case I must first inform her of your arrival. Who can say how she will receive the news?”

And shuffling in front of me along the corridor, he cautiously opened a door in a kind of vaulted hall, studded with rows of curtainless windows. I could hear him speaking of a gentleman who wished to see

his sister, and I could hear the well-known voice reply that she had no brother to visit her. But just as the monk was about to leave her, I brushed past him into the apartment, and with a piercing cry, “Jannino!” Lavinia arose with difficulty from an easy chair, tottered towards me, and fell senseless at my feet.

The monk looked at me reproachfully.

“How could you give her such a terrible shock, a poor woman in that condition?”

“In—that—condition?”

At that very moment she opened her eyes, and with both hands thrust me from her.

“Go away, Jannino! Go away immediately! You must not look at me! I am unworthy of you! Go away! I felt so forsaken, so utterly forsaken, and it seemed to me after you had gone away that my life was no longer of any value to myself or to anyone else. Oh God, I suffer terribly!”

How can I fittingly describe the hours that followed, hours that I spent beside her couch in terrible agony of mind; how find words to picture the wild rage that convulsed my heart against the wretch who had dared to shatter and desecrate what to me had been so sacred.

By daybreak, a stillness as of death reigned in the desolate chamber; Lavinia had been delivered of a stillborn child, and herself lay very nigh unto death. The monk and I had watched alone and unaided through those terrible hours, for had we tried to obtain assistance from without, we might thereby have betrayed the very being who wished her secret to remain hidden within those walls. When I had convinced myself that Lavinia really lived, and was likely to continue to live, I saddled my horse, and rode home, promising to return in the course of the evening, and to remain with her throughout the night.

The sea beat, softly murmuring, against the cliffs, and the waves glittered, rose-tinted, in the beams of the rising sun. Scalding tears were coursing down my cheeks, and falling on my beard as I rode away; in the course of that night I had been by turns confessor and physician, and was as little fitted for the one rôle as for the other. My soul was torn by such unspeakable anguish that I would gladly have spurred my horse to take a wild leap into the waves beneath.

By degrees I learned that someone had sought out

Lavinia in her solitude and desolation, had paid her attentions, had promised her marriage, and had ruthlessly abandoned her. A very old and simple story. But such shame and misery should never have touched my goddess, my glorious Lavinia. She ought never have been trampled on and forsaken, she whom I had held sacred, whom I had kept pure as a spotless lily.

The confession of that night came to me in broken sentences, from groaning, quivering lips, perpetually interrupted by the agonised entreaty that I would go away ; yet at the same time she clung to me like a drowning creature. To me it seemed that I hated, almost abhorred her, and yet my heart was torn with compassion for her forlorn and miserable condition. Utterly exhausted, I threw myself, without undressing, on my bed, and slept for several hours.

My mother was quite at ease in her mind. She had made careful enquiries, had learned that the villa was deserted, and that the young lady had disappeared from the neighbourhood. I could see that her brow was no longer clouded by care and anxiety on my account, although she complained that I was looking very pale and worn.

In the evening I again made my appearance at the monastery, saying that I had come to watch by my sister. She kissed my hands when I entered the room, and allowed me to nurse and tend her as though she had been a child. But now and then she would hide her face, sobbing, in the pillows.

"Jannino ! you are a saint, and I adore you ; but I am so ashamed before you that I would gladly die !"

Every night, as soon as there was no longer any risk of my betraying her secret, I rode up the steep rocky pathway that led to the monastery, sometimes by moonlight, sometimes in the pitch darkness of a starless gloom, and remained with her till morning dawned. In those nights I seemed to myself like some venerable old man, who is trying to gently lead a poor erring child back into the right path. I felt, at times, as though my heart's blood were slowly ebbing from me, for the sight of her humility—a humility that is born of a crushed and broken spirit—was a torture to me. At such times I positively hated her. But when she was merely the loving, confiding child, confessing everything to her brother, and longing, in all the unutterable torment of a sin-and grief-laden conscience, for comfort and absolution,

then I was as full of compassion as though I had never entertained any other feeling for her.

In the early morning I used to ride home, smiling to myself sometimes at the services I had been rendering. I had learned to be content with only two hours' sleep, and if I was at times rather taciturn, my mother used to lay all the blame on old reminiscences, which, as she imagined, still lingered in my memory. She told me she thought we had best leave Sorrento, for she could see by my looks that old memories were tormenting me. I needed only to look in the glass, she declared, to see how thin and hollow-eyed I was becoming. Her handsome son was really beginning to look like a worn old man. This sort of life continued for five weeks, for Lavinia recovered slowly and with difficulty; my nursing must have been most awkward and defective, and the honest monks understood nothing except their herbal remedies. They were firmly persuaded that I was Lavinia's brother, gave me friendly greeting every evening, brought me wine to drink during my night watch, and treated me with respect, as they might have treated one who was bearing a great misfortune with patience and resignation.

But oh, how far from me were patience and resignation !

One stormy night, when the waves were seething and raging beneath me, I had a wild and dangerous journey ; it was only at the risk of my life that I at length succeeded in reaching the monastery, and in that very night Lavinia lay between life and death. Would that she had indeed died !

At last, however, her convalescence was very nearly complete, but in proportion as her health improved my heart grew colder : often indeed I terrified her by my harshness and severity. I never scolded, never punished her, but I talked with her sternly and earnestly. There was no tenderness or sentiment in the relations between us. When she wept silently I pretended not to notice her.

She was very timid and shy with me, and often trembled when I entered and gave her my hand. One evening I said :—

“ Everything is ready for your departure tomorrow. Your place on board ship is taken ; you will go to Marseilles, to your aunt. I have already given notice of your arrival there, and have sent a telegram with your signature.”

Lavinia fell upon her knees before me.

“Oh, not there, I entreat, I implore you! Oh, anywhere, send me anywhere you please, only not to my aunt! I cannot endure it! She will kill me!”

“Do you suppose that I shall leave you here in the streets? You will please to betake yourself to the only place of refuge that Heaven and your own foolishness have left you.”

She leaned against the window-sill and wept bitterly. I stood with folded arms before her, looking coldly down upon her as she wept, and waited until she once more turned upon me her large, frightened eyes, like those of some poor terrified animal that trembles before its master.

She used every imaginable argument to induce me not to send her to Marseilles, but in vain: I remained firm. Our struggle lasted many hours. At length she let head and arms sink, saying:—

“As you will.”

I suffered no sort of pain or regret when I saw her drive away; my heart seemed to have died in me, and to be no longer capable of love. It was she who had crushed and killed it.

“Come, mother,” I said, “let us return home.”

"Home!" she replied, "but surely you ought to recover your health a little before you return home! Just look in the glass, my poor boy! Your eyes are as hollow as saucers; what makes you wish to go home so soon?"

"Perhaps I shall feel better there, mother."

But I was just as ill and restless at home as I had been in Sorrento, and I informed my mother, soon after our return, that I had made up my mind to go to America.

"But you can't speak a word of English! I shall try and procure someone who will serve at the same time as companion for me and as teacher for you."

And so she invited Nora to come and stay with us.

My mother and I were about equally fascinated by her unusual intelligence and brilliant culture. Her lessons became conversations replete with interest and information; her reading aloud was a positive enjoyment. My brother even began to pay her attention. After several weeks—nine, I believe, was the exact number—my mother said one day:—

"What a pity that she is not of noble birth. She would be a daughter-in-law after my own heart."

I went immediately to Nora, knocked at the door of

her sitting-room, seated myself at her writing-table, and asked her whether she would consent to become my wife.

And so she has become my wife. Naturally my mother was only half pleased at what I had done. She had had no idea when she spoke to me of Nora's perfections, that I was in the mood to commit some mad action, merely for the sake of freeing myself from the sensation of desolation, of death-like indifference, that was weighing upon my heart like lead. But she never went back from her word. As for Nora, the more intimate became the relations between us, the more indifferent I grew towards her, and I began to realise with horror that I was bound to her, bound for ever. But when I made the discovery that she was actually in love with me, my terror became indescribable.

At my wedding breakfast I looked so pale that the lady sitting next me advised me to go into the fresh air for a short space of time, for I appeared, she said, as though I were going to faint. I went out, longing from my soul that it were possible for me never to return. For the first time in my life I was conscious of a desire to commit suicide. I wandered about the

park, haunted by thoughts of death and despair, until at length I began to reflect that, were I never to return, it would not be exactly a gentlemanly thing to do, and were I to kill myself, such a catastrophe would be a lasting disgrace to the memory of an honourable and upright gentleman, who had no crime on his conscience.

On my return, Nora's large grey eyes looked at me as shrewdly and critically as though they could read into the very depths of my soul, could see into my brain, and even through the walls beyond ; and as though she knew accurately what had been my thoughts while in the park. Her nose took an expressive but almost imperceptible curve, and her lips became ever so lightly compressed ; then she turned to one of her guests with some clever, witty saying. She was not in the least shy or timid, but as self-possessed as though she had been my Lady Countess all her life. For my part I began to jest, and to talk small talk until the carriage was announced that was to bear us away on our honeymoon trip.

## CHAPTER III.

ZURICH, *April 20th.*

I HAVE seen her, and I thought my heart would break. She never saw me, however. It was at Lucerne, in front of the Lions.

We had grown tired of the Isle of Wight, and had gone to Switzerland, there travelling from place to place. Nora had never been to this mountainous country before. I dislike Switzerland—probably very bad taste on my part, but I have several good reasons for my dislike. I had made my way, alone, to the Lions, and was sitting there, quite hidden by the dense mass of foliage, vexing my soul over all the insignificant and unpoetical objects that surrounded me—the tiny, toylike houses, the narrow roads, the dwarfish doors, with dwarf trees in front; all tending, in my estimation, to disfigure and belittle not only those grand masterpieces of human art, but also those magnificent masterpieces of nature, the glaciers and glacier ravines.

Just then I was startled by the sound of a sharp, disagreeable voice:—

“When I have once told you that I will not permit anything, you will please to obey me, Lavinia.”

My heart stood still; I waited for an answer, but none came; the only sound that I could catch was a short dry cough.

“I should very much like to know, Lavinia, who it is that has trained you to be what you are. To take sea trips with a stranger, indeed! Are you not ashamed of yourself?”

Still there was no answer.

“I shall yet live to find out what sort of life you used to lead when you were living in your villa in Sorrento, and I warn you, if it was not a respectable and honest life, all is over between us. Your sister swears that she had good reasons for her jealousy, and now that I know more of you and your ways, I can scarcely blame her for acting as she did. You are a shameless coquette. Do you think I have no eyes? You even bring your blood-spitting into the service of your coquetry. You begin to spit blood immediately you think anyone is near who can see you, and who

is likely to be horrified and to talk about the poor, consumptive Lavinia and her old dragon of an aunt."

A short laugh, a well-known short laugh, that again ended in a short cough.

"Laugh away! You have no more heart than a siren. Do you think I am taken in by your sad eyes? That expression is merely put on to attract men: to make them think you are dying of a broken heart; when there is no one near to admire and pity you, you have a very good appetite. I believe you will kill me with vexation, and your uncle also—your uncle, who picked you up out of the street, as it were, when no one else would take you in. And just supposing we had shut our doors upon you lately, what do you think would have become of you?"

At that moment the ladies passed close by me. Yes, that was Lavinia; that was the same beautiful, slender figure, now become rather thinner. She turned away from her aunt for a moment, and coughed, and I could see her handkerchief become stained blood-red; I could observe the quivering of her finely formed nostrils, and admire the way in which her noble profile told out against the grey rocks. I felt such a sensation of giddiness, such a sharp and gnawing pain

at my heart, that I was on the point of committing some mad, foolish action. But the consciousness of the distressing and impossible situation into which I might bring us all by such a course, nailed me to my seat.

To me it was as the rack. Had she but uttered one word, one single word ! But she said nothing : she glided past me like a vision. For a moment I once more caught sight of her as she ascended the narrow path that leads up to the glaciers, and then she had disappeared.

I knew well that she must return by the same path, and great was the struggle that ensued in my breast. I longed to wait for her, to greet her as a distant acquaintance, but the voice of conscience whispered, " You are on your wedding journey. Do nothing of which you might afterwards feel ashamed."

I arose and left the place slowly, very slowly. Perhaps, by some fortunate chance, she might overtake me. Once out of the garden, however, I walked so quickly that I almost ran. I told Nora that I could not possibly remain here any longer, that the crowds of people, staring open-mouthed at the magnificence of nature, were an abomination to me ; that I wished above all things

to get home. So we packed up, and now we are here, and the more quickly we continue our journey the better pleased I shall be. It seems as though some fury were driving me farther, ever farther.

FREIBURG IN BREISGAU, *May 6th.*

I have been to the cathedral, and to the Schlossberg, and to all the places usually visited by travellers. I have been roaming all over this place. Nora is tired, and has her twenty letters to finish. I have had a shock, a terrible shock. I can't think what possessed me, one day in Zurich, to sit down before a piano that stood in our sitting-room. I began to play and sing as in old times. Nora was sitting by the window, in order, so she assured me, to look at the mountains on the further side of the lake, but in reality she was criticising the people walking in the garden, making satirical observations about them, and interrupting me in my playing, for she is not in the least musical.

"Well, I never saw anything so ridiculous as that old gentleman over there. What a scarecrow. He is making up to all the young girls, and they are nearly dying with laughter at him.—There goes a charming trio, husband, wife and friend of the family, taking an

amicable stroll together.—And there's a young wife who makes her little son serve her as chaperon, while an officer sits by her side, talking with her the whole day long. But it's all perfectly honourable, you know; of course, the child is always with them.”

“Nora, will you be so good as to spare me your remarks? I do not take the slightest interest in any of the people down below there; I wish they were all at the Devil!”

“How very impolite!”

“Well, you know, you have yet to put the finishing touches to my education. In the meanwhile try if you can remain quiet for a little while, and keep your remarks to yourself.”

I was so angry that I played like a madman, and the piano groaned under my hands. At length my mood became calmer, and I began to sing; to sing some of my dear old songs, those that I had composed for Lavinia in Sorrento.

When at last I ceased singing, my wife was still gazing, apparently with the same lively interest as before, into the garden below. I thought it very possible that some people might have gathered there to listen to my singing, and, as I had no wish for

publicity, avoided going near the window, took my hat, and leaving the house by a back entrance, went by a circuitous route in the direction of the lake. On my return I found everything packed ready for our departure; my wife wished to leave the place at once, she said. She did not like Freiburg; and she wished to continue the journey homewards. Since that meeting in Lucerne everything was one and the same to me. I simply complied with the inevitable.

We are now at Schaffhausen, near the falls of the Rhine, and I am thinking to myself how stupid and insignificant are these same far-famed falls.

“*À propos,*” says my wife, “there was a most interesting little interlude in Zurich. While you were singing and playing, a very beautiful lady came towards our window; she looked like a southerner; she had large dark eyes, black waving hair, and a beauty spot on the left cheek. Pale, and with parted lips, she leaned against the posts of one of the garden swings, the tears trickling down her cheeks. At first she stood with her head slightly bent forwards, so as to be able to hear better through the tumult of voices surrounding her, but very soon three was

perfect stillness. You had a most attentive audience, Ewald, and you gave them a delightful concert. Afterwards the lady raised her eyes to our window, and when she observed me, her expression changed immediately to one of the wildest rage ; she pressed her hands to her breast, and looked at me as though she would gladly kill me. Of course, I looked down at her very calmly and composedly ; what harm could her hatred do me, seeing that I am your wife, and under your protection ?—Suddenly she called out something ; what it was I could not quite make out because you were making so much noise ; it sounded like ‘Janni,’ and then like ‘Nino,’ and then, just as she was about to call out again, a stream of blood gushed from her mouth, and she fell down in a swoon. An old lady came towards her, scolding and shaking her head, lifted her up in her arms, and had her carried away as soon as possible. A few minutes later, when I turned round to speak to you, you had left the room. Did you not meet her ?”

While my wife was speaking, I felt as though my whole body had been transformed into a raging, tossing sea. She spoke as she always does, quite clearly and distinctly, so that in spite of the roaring

and raging of the cascade close by, it was not possible for any of her words to escape me. She looked at me with her great eyes, as a cat looks at the mousehole behind which lurks the prey that she hopes soon to tear to pieces.

"Why did you not tell me all this before?" I said at last.

"You forget that you had just forbidden me, in rather an angry tone, to trouble you with any of my observations or remarks."

I could not find a word to say in answer. It seemed to me as though—were my wife to utter another syllable—I should be forced to hurl her into the gulf beneath; as though I must hurl myself thither, and be dashed to atoms amidst the crashing, seething waters. She endeavoured to say something, but I could not hear what it was, and did not try to hear. She wanted me to come away from the falls, but I stood there, mute and immovable as a column. In those moments I took careful measure of the suffering into which I had so rashly and incautiously plunged myself. I began to recognise in my wife a dangerous antagonist; one who would never flinch in guarding her rights, and who would

never fail to scourge me, if she thought it necessary, with the scourge of duty.

My buried love for Lavinia began to revive in all its former power, as though the fatal words, "lost," "ruined," had never separated us, as though I had never known of her dishonour. I felt as though my heart must break.

"She certainly could have been no acquaintance of yours," shouted Nora into my ears, "for the name that she called out did not resemble yours in the least. Who knows of what former lover your songs may have reminded her, poor forlorn creature!"

Still I remained silent. I clenched my teeth as though I were undergoing some terrible operation, and were determined not to cry out under the pain. Whether I was able to prevent my face from betraying the tumult of emotion within me, I have my doubts. For my wife's eyes seemed to pierce me like a stiletto. At last I found strength to ask her:—

"How can you take so much interest in perfect strangers?"

"I was interested in the look, so full of most intense hatred, that she cast at me. No human

being has ever looked at me like that before. I felt just as though a serpent were hissing at me, but a serpent safely caged behind the glass doors of a menagerie, where I could look at it without the slightest danger, and could even amuse myself by watching its impotent rage. When the rush of blood came, however, I was really sorry for the poor creature; but since I could not be of any possible assistance to her, I remained where I was."

We looked into one another's eyes, as though each of us wished to sound the other's powers of dissimulation. It was certainly not love that we saw mirrored there, but a dangerous game, being played with sharp and highly-polished weapons. I was just conscious that if I did not wish to become her slave and prisoner, utterly and entirely in her power, I must on no account allow her to gain even the smallest advantage over me.

"If you have stared sufficiently at the falls," I said at last, "let us go home to dinner; I am as hungry as a hunter."

She looked disappointed, and as for me, the consciousness that after all I had not succumbed to her rendered me almost overbearing. I began to banter

her unmercifully about all her little weaknesses. She, however, kept her temper admirably, parried all my thrusts in most amiable fashion, and looked as delighted as though I had been saying the most tender and loving things to her. Dinner was a most trying ordeal for me ; not the utmost force of will could enable me to swallow a morsel, although I tried to force an appetite by drinking glass after glass of wine. I grumbled at the bad cooking, complained of headache, and said that I must go to my room and sleep. For the first time since our marriage I locked the door of my chamber. I felt that at any cost I must be alone for a time.

For a while I was mad ; I am convinced of this ; my brain seemed on fire : I felt as though every nerve in my body had been stretched and torn. Like a madman, I raged against myself, against my fate, against my weakness of character, and against my own foolishness. I hated my wife, I cursed my mother. And what crime has my wife committed, after all ? Absolutely nothing with which I have any right to reproach her. She has merely acted with great prudence and discretion. But that is exactly what makes me feel so wild.

FRANKFORT, *May 15th.*

My wife is enchanted with this place, but I am unable to share in her delight. She drags me with her into all the fashionable shops, full of showy goods that are, one and all, so inartistic that the mere sight of them sets one's teeth on edge. She takes quite a childish delight in all sorts of modish articles, which in the space of one short year will be valueless, because no longer the fashion. Oh, this money-getting, money-loving Frankfort! One has the feeling as though so much gold has been amassed here that it must of necessity sprout forth, as leaf and blossom, from every bush and shrub and tree in the place.

To-morrow we propose returning, *via* Cassel, to my estate at Haxtroden. I feel depressed and anxious. How will it fare with me in the home of my forefathers, when I shall have introduced there the woman who in future is to be its mistress? Would she have it in her power to make any other man happy? I have been thinking lately that perhaps the best thing I can do is to take to smoking opium, so that any rate I may lull myself in a dream of happiness, although the reality is denied me.

I would far rather Nora were stupid. Her shrewd cleverness has brought me into more complete subjection than have the charms of any woman I have ever met. Never, by any chance, does she give me a pretext, an opportunity for venting my anger upon her; for she is always amiable and good-humoured, and has perfect command over herself. It is just as though I tried to make scratches on a mirror with my fingernails; the polished surface remains as smooth and clear as ever, and only reflects my own distorted countenance until I turn away from it, ashamed. In her presence I feel at times like a boy; I try to play the rôle of master, and in all good humour and friendliness she allows me to play it. She even watches me as though she were highly amused at my performance.

Sometimes I meet her large eyes resting upon me just as they did on our wedding day; as though I were transparent, and as though she could see into my brain, and read there thoughts that I would never have her even guess.

The Zurich affair is no longer mentioned by either of us, although it is quite certain that it is never absent from our minds for very long. Nora has a burning desire to know who was the heroine of that little

episode, and she has a clear perception that the lady is at any rate one who might possibly become her most dangerous rival. And thus we play hide-and-seek with one another, behaving very much like the judge and the defendant in a criminal trial: the one trying his best to extort a confession, which the other has determined shall never be wrung from him.

HAXTRODEN, *May 24th.*

It is cool, very cool here. My mother took the greatest pains to make her welcome to Nora as hearty and cordial as possible, and privately expressed her joy to me that an heir was likely to arrive before very long, but she gazed at me at the same time with eyes full of doubt and anxiety, saying that I had grown terribly thin and careworn. My God—a second pair of eyes to follow me everywhere with doubts and inquiries and suspicions! How uncomfortable one's life may be made by sheer love!

Nora is in a state of almost childish delight about everything. She is celebrating her memories of the fireplace by which she read aloud to us for the first time, of the carpet on which we were standing when I first admired her handwriting, of the park and the

wood, which she now sees for the first time in their summer dress. She is roaming through the house, unpacking her purchases, and decorating the room with them.

My studio is the only exception: thither she has been absolutely forbidden to bring anything whatever, and she is only allowed to enter it on very rare occasions. She is bitterly disappointed. She thought that she would be permitted to bring her book and sit beside me, and now I ask to be left alone there. When I first entered my sanctum, I longed to cast myself at full length on the thick, soft carpet, instead of exhibiting the contents and furniture of the room to the curious eyes of my young wife. She opened the piano.

“There—do play something!”

I sat down and let my fingers glide over the keys. On a sudden I was startled by a low cry from Nora, and looking round, I saw that she was examining attentively, almost hungrily, a picture that had hung with its face towards the wall, but which she had turned towards herself.

A sensation of tingling and heat passed through my body, even to my finger-tips. Nora had lighted upon

Lavinia's portrait, which I had painted almost entirely from memory.

I continued to play in order not to be obliged to speak. For a long, long time she stood gazing at the portrait, and at length, with a deep sigh, replaced it in its former position. Then she turned shyly and cautiously round, but I kept my eyes fixed on the notes, as though I had observed nothing. She had grown very pale—I could see that as she passed by me to inspect some of the curious things I had collected in my study.

She lifted a Moorish coverlet, and gazed at the skeleton which had been hidden by it; from the skeleton her eyes wandered to the portrait hanging in the corner of the room, and then back again to the skeleton, as though she were saying to herself:—

“After all, under your external appearance this is what you really are, and this is what you will become very soon!”

Then she let the coverlet fall again. It is a remarkably beautiful coverlet, of such a brilliant yellow that in the very farthest corner of the room it shines out like a sunbeam. She, however, had no sense for its beauty, and did not even admire the dainty

embroidery upon it, worked in red, rose-colour, green, and lilac, which harmonises so perfectly with the yellow background that it rejoices one's heart to look at it.

She can talk learnedly about pictures and schools of painting, but she has no sense of colour. Lavinia would at once have draped the coverlet around her, and have looked at herself in the mirror, certain of being gloriously beautiful enveloped in that mass of lustrous gold; she would have stretched herself like a kitten on the magnificent black fur rug in front of the fire-place, would have rolled herself up in it, and would have looked in the rosy light very like a young panther.

Faint shadows of evening began to be reflected through the tall window-panes, the arms hanging on the walls glittered in the waning light, and my unfinished pictures looked pale and spectral.

Nora still continued to wander up and down the room, taking every object in her hand so as to examine it more closely, with the exception of some old scraps and pieces of material that I dearly prized on account of their exquisite tints, which she kicked away from her contemptuously, or else took between the tips of

her thumb and fore-finger, only to cast them away from her and then wipe her fingers on her handkerchief. Lavinia would have taken up such a thing only to throw it into the most picturesque folds possible.

I suffered the pains of hell, but, nevertheless, took a sort of demoniacal pleasure in torturing myself to the uttermost. No movement escaped me. She was not looking towards me any longer, for she had gone up to my writing-table, and was examining the picture that hung immediately above it, a study by Greco, which I prize on account of its harmonious colouring. She sneered ever so slightly, then smiled, and I could almost hear her say : “Excellent !”

Then she began to search among the papers on my writing-table. I knew that there lay unfinished poems, aphorisms, and a quartet, only half finished, but neither letters nor business documents. Such things are never placed on this desk—my library is for that purpose, not my studio.

I still continued to play, however, although I could distinctly hear the rustle of her dress, and there was a curious singing in my ears, and a tingling in all my nerves. I cannot endure to have my writing-table touched.

At last she sank exhausted into an easy-chair in front of my easel, and looked at the unfinished picture standing there. It represented a boy of Sorrento, lying at full length on the ground, teasing a crab—background of sea and sunset.

I continued playing until I heard Nora yawn once, twice, and then I got up from the piano.

"Do you know, Ewald," she said, "this place is very untidy, and full of dust. To-morrow I mean to have it thoroughly cleaned and put to rights."

"If you will have the goodness not to touch a single thing in this room, I shall be very thankful to you. Nothing lies or stands here without a purpose, and I shall be furious if one fold is disarranged. I must also beg of you, as a rule, to leave me undisturbed here when I am writing. Into my study you may come at any time. But here, where it is a question of imaginative work, I must on no account be disturbed."

She was silent. The evening shadows lengthened, and all objects in the room looked dark and sombre, except the Moorish coverlet and the sky of my unfinished picture. The little travelling-clock on my writing-table struck the hour in low, deep tones,



like a far distant church clock. Nora sobbed audibly several times, but did not speak. I was terribly afraid she would burst into tears. Just then someone lifted the portière, placed so as to deaden the sound of the opening and shutting of the doors of studio and sanctum, now already brilliantly illuminated with a broad gleam of light which fell over the carpet. A servant entered, bearing a shaded lamp, which he placed on my writing-table, and disappeared. Then he brought a second lamp, which he placed on the reading-table by the divan, in the darkest corner of the studio, thereby illuminating the coverlet that Lavinia had given me. Next came a hanging lamp, which was not placed in the centre of the room but in a corner, just over the piano, for lights placed on the piano disturb me so much that I am unable to compose anything when they are there, and since it is my habit to paint in the day-time and to compose in the evening, the light is disposed in this manner. I ought rather to say, it used once to be my habit to paint in the day-time and to compose in the evening, for now I no longer do anything whatever at any time.

As soon as the room had been so lit up as to

assume an air of indescribable comfort and pleasantness, a bell announced that it was time to dress for dinner. Nora arose.

"What dress shall I wear?" she said. She was extraordinarily pale.

"Wear something white: it suits you, and my mother likes it. Have you no dress of ivory-coloured wool—some soft, transparent fabric that falls into soft, graceful folds of its own accord?"

"No, I have nothing of that kind. I have only my wedding dress, trimmed with lace, and my satin dress."

"Wear the satin then; you look like a Vandyke in that white satin dress."

She blushed. "If I can only manage to fasten it!" she said.

Thereupon I flung my arm round her waist, and drew her to me; but she freed herself from my embrace, and slipped out of the room without looking back. Looking down, I saw something glistening on my coat: it was a tear. I never ventured to wipe it away, but gazed down at it until it had been gradually absorbed by the stuff, and I made a sacred resolve that Nora should never shed another through any fault of mine. It was enough for me that on

this evening she had learned what were the limits of her power, and it gave me a feeling of comparative rest and peace to reflect that I had so decidedly and accurately defined those limits that there was now, at any rate, one room which was mine exclusively, and which we should never dwell in together; one piece of ground wherein the spell of her power over me was broken. I felt that I had given her great pain, and that during that hour in my atelier I had forced her to swallow a very bitter draught; therefore I took pains to make the evening as pleasant and agreeable to her as possible.

I begged her to read aloud to us, as in olden times, I assured her that she looked very beautiful in the lamplight, and told her how cleverly she had managed to arrange her lace so as to hide the fact that she was no longer able to fasten her dress. She smiled with pleasure, and once more blushed deeply. My mother watched us with that disagreeable scrutinising glance of hers which robs me of all peace of mind.

HAXTRODEN, June 8th.

When the child shall have come, many things will be different, for then, I hope, there will be warmer

and tenderer relations between us. I try my best to be gentle and kind to Nora, and to make her as happy as possible, for I feel bound to atone to her as far as I can for having made her my wife without loving her. I can never forgive myself for having done this. It was a wicked thing to do. And then, if, through me, she becomes a mother !

*June 9th.*—I am forced to laugh bitterly over my last sentence. She has just confessed to me that she does not like the prospect of becoming a mother, that she is terribly frightened, and, since she has never yet looked attentively at a little baby, she imagines they are all very ugly.

Oh why, why did she tell me all this? Did she wish to avenge herself upon me? Can she not forgive me for the portrait of Lavinia and for my silence? Since that day she has often sought for the picture, but has never succeeded in finding it.

One day she went so far as to say :—

“Where are all your studies and sketches? I thought there had been more of them.”

“A good many; those that I can’t endure the sight of any longer are in the granary.”

And she went to the granary.

A few days later she questioned me about my models. In an indifferent tone I gave her a description of those poor creatures. Then she began to talk about my residence in Italy. I told her about my sister, and then passed on quickly to the subject of Egypt.

"So that was the trouble of which your mother once spoke to me, and on account of which she wished me to distract and amuse you as much as possible."

"That was really very kind of my mother," I said angrily. "Possibly, however, I have just sufficient manliness to have recovered without any assistance of the sort."

In these days I often drive Nora four-in-hand ; this delights her. What would please her most would be to have permission to take the reins herself in her little nervous hands, but she is not allowed to do this —my mother will not hear of such a thing.

"You are happy, are you not ?" asked my mother yesterday.

"Why should I not be happy ? I have a wife who is perfection itself."

"And do you feel quite well ?"

"Oh yes, only lazy. I can no longer work at anything."

"I am afraid you are not really well—you are growing so terribly thin."

"That is never unpleasant, dear mother."

Then she began to talk about my brothers, who were just then causing us great anxiety. Over and over again have I paid their debts. My wife was displeased at this, and gave it as her opinion that they did not deserve any assistance, and ought to be made to find out how they could get on in the world without it.

"But one of them has a little child, Nora."

"It would have been far better if that child had never been born," she replied.

Of course this remark was unanswerable.

HAXTRODEN, *July 10th.*

The confession that I am going to make to these pages to-day is made in a spirit of bitter repentance and tormenting anguish of soul.

I have upset the four-in-hand with my young wife. Never in all my life before have I met with any accident in driving, but to-day I wished to drive up

in style, took too abrupt a curve, and just as the four horses were in full swing, we came full tilt against a block of stone, and were thrown out. Nora fell in a sitting position. Calm and self-possessed, as always, she smiled at me, saying she was not in the least hurt, and could very well get up without any assistance. But since that fall she can no longer feel the dear life throbbing within her.

I entreated her to go to bed at once, and am now watching beside her. At times I am overmastered by my longing and impatience, and am constrained to ask her whether she no longer feels anything. Then she looks at me with her large, earnest eyes, and says, "No, nothing."

It is of little use pacing up and down my studio raving, and tearing my hair. I cannot say to myself, "It is not my fault." My mother tries her best to comfort me, but what comfort is there left for me? The one, the only thing that made my life endurable, the hope of having a child of my own, has vanished. Like a cold, grey mist, the conviction that the child is dead creeps into my heart and chills it with the chill of death, and then it begins to beat like a trip hammer, so that there is no longer any chance for me of rest or sleep.

Nora remains perfectly quiet and patient, but evidently suffers a good deal, and complains of a constant feeling of chilliness. Whenever she alludes to this I am obliged to leave the room, for fear of bursting into tears before her. How gladly would I put an end to my life!

*August 2nd.*—We have passed through three terrible, miserable days, and now the dead body of my little daughter lies here in my studio—embedded in flowers.

At first—after the agony of those terrible hours, during which my poor wife suffered like a heroine, and showed almost superhuman courage and fortitude—my nerves were in such a shattered state that I refused even to see the child. But when at length I mustered sufficient courage to look at it, I found the little body—white and still as a snowflake—so very lovely that I brought it here, and now I have locked all the doors, and am seated beside it weeping.

Nora lies at the point of death, so wildly delirious that she is absolutely unconscious of the presence of those around her. Before they were able to take the child away from her, she began to rave, and kept on repeating:—

"If only she were not so beautiful ! But she is so beautiful that I am nothing in comparison with her ! She is like a queen, like a panther, like an Arabian. Oh, how am I to win his heart, so long as he cannot forget her ? The portrait ! Give me that portrait ! It is in the studio in the corner. Don't you know it—that beautiful portrait ?

"Ah, with what wild, fierce hatred she looked at me, as though she were challenging me to a struggle for life or death !

"And I felt certain of victory, and believed that she must soon die, but she—she killed me with that look. Why did he not marry her, if he loved her so dearly ? And then her blood began to flow ; it went on flowing, flowing, and I gazed at it, and saw how red, red it was. What name did she call out ? 'Anni' ? 'Nino' ? I was very hard and cruel and revengeful. Oh, do give me that picture ! Has he hidden it ? Is he then so very frightened ? The portrait—I must have the portrait ! He never even winced when I dealt him such a deadly blow at the Falls of the Rhine ! That was a bad omen for me ! I knew then that I should never possess his heart. I wanted to see his heart quite, quite bare ; I wanted

to see it quivering; I longed to have it, to possess it; for it is mine by right.

"But, he is so proud, he concealed it. And in that moment I loved him madly. And the waters went on roaring and roaring. . . . I should like to have gone on my knees and begged his pardon. But we were both of us too proud. 'Nino!' she called; yes, she cried 'Nino!' so loudly; but he heard nothing—he was blind and deaf. When I told him all this, his lips grew quite white, but he never winced. I thought he would surely have cried out with pain; but no—he took my weapon from me, and struck me in the heart with it. And that is why the child died. It is my agony and his agony together that has killed the child. I will have his heart! Oh, give me my husband's heart! Can't you give it me then? Am I never to have it?"

At these wild sayings of my poor wife, my mother gazed at me open-eyed. Already I have had my pistols in my hand. But the sight of the little child, so still and peaceful, had more power over me than even the soul-rending words of my wife. That sight would not allow me to put an end to myself.

To-day she cried with a wild, bitter laugh:—

"He thinks I do not understand him! But I can read him like an open book. I know why he is weeping. Oh, he is weeping so bitterly, so bitterly, but not for me. He is weeping for the child, and for *her*. Oh, how he weeps! I saw him go and fetch his pistols, and my heart beat with terror; it beat so fast, and I longed to cry out.

"But I did not want everybody to know, so I lay quite still, and only said to myself:—'You ought not to do that! No, you have no right to do that!' And then he laid the pistols down, and threw himself on his knees before the child. Oh, do take away the pistols, or he will try to shoot himself!"

She gave a loud shriek. "No, I must not cry out, or the world will discover our secrets. But don't leave the pistols there, for if I see him go and fetch them again I shall go mad. See how he is kissing the cold, dead child! He never kisses me like that! Can no one help us, then? He imagines I know nothing about *her*! But I have known for some time that her name is Lavinia. I have put such clever, cautious questions to his mother, so as to try and learn something from her, but she seems to know nothing. Much more has passed between

them than he has ever told her—his mother—but what? How is it that he still loves her—Lavinia—with such mad love?"

"What torture! When she talks like this before my mother, before the doctor, before her maids, I feel as though I were on the rack. I dare not look anyone of them in the face, and they dare not look at me. Nora has never tortured me consciously and deliberately, as she is now torturing me unconsciously. She talks without ceasing: just as though she felt compelled to free herself at last from the burden of a heretofore perpetual silence.

*August 10th.*—My child is buried, and Nora is very near her grave. Her thoughts range perpetually in the same narrow circle. Sometimes she merely murmurs quite softly, but the murmur is always "Lavinia!" My mother has not yet ventured to question me about anything, except with her eyes, which I do my best to avoid. I bear a grudge against my mother, and am unable to forgive her; it is she who has forged the chains whose heavy burden I must bear to my life's end.

*August 16th.*—The doctors have grave doubts of Nora's recovery. They are sending telegrams to other

doctors, and consulting together, and shaking their heads at one another. And each fresh doctor has to listen to the same story: that it is all my fault, that my wife was thrown out of a carriage through my carelessness. It is enough to drive one mad! I shall sell those horses—I will never see them again. It was not their fault though, after all, poor beasts!

To-day I was in my studio; the door leading into my study happened to be ajar, and so I overheard a conversation between my mother and the doctors.

First they discussed Nora's case, which the physicians apparently look upon as well-nigh hopeless, and then they spoke of me. My mother is very anxious about the state of my health. I heard her say:—

“It is quite shocking to see how thin he is growing: his chest is shrunken and hollow, and his hair is beginning to turn grey!”

“That is quite in the natural order of things,” was the reply. “Such mental agony as he has been forced to endure must of necessity prey upon and exhaust the vital forces, without there being any physical derangement whatever.”

“Yes,” replied my mother, “and the effect on him of all this mental trouble is so much the more fatal

because he is always silent about such matters, and never speaks to anyone of the terrible self-reproach that is consuming him."

Ah! would that my strength might indeed become quickly exhausted!

*September 1st.*—Nora still lives!—that is all that can be said of her at present. During the last few days no one has even thought of going to bed: she has been hovering, as it were, between life and death.

When she first recognised me, such an angelic smile, a smile of such rapturous delight, passed over her countenance, that I hid myself behind the bed-curtains: it was as though a vision had smiled upon me. Nora is scarcely to be recognised. Her beautiful hair has fallen off, her cheeks have become hollow, and she looks like an old woman. To-day I gently stroked my cheeks with her transparent little hand, lying like a lily leaf on the white coverlet. Her eyes appear the largest part of her whole face; although they have lost nothing of their expression of sharpness and penetration, there is in them now a suggestion of sorrow which greatly tends to soften and subdue their brilliancy.

If she only knew all that she had said in those

long, long weeks ! If she only knew how she has laid bare all the deepest wounds of my heart for the inspection of strangers ; for how long hours at a time she has constantly had me under the dissecting-knife, she would indeed be wretched. To-day as she was gazing at me, her eyes filled with tears, but she said nothing. Ah, how true it is that genuine outpourings of the heart only occur during the silent watches af the night !

Silence once more reigns between us. If this state of things continues, neither of us will ever be able to recover, especially since I have learned that it will never again be possible for her to become a mother. For me there is in her gaze a silent but perpetual reproach.

Yes, all hope of motherhood for her is past for ever. For myself there could be no more cruel punishment than this, for I used to console myself with the prospect of a house full of children. My home, however, must remain empty, as far as these dear beings are concerned, until my brother takes possession of it. The inheritance may be of use to him, for he has nothing—less than nothing. He no longer tells me the full amount of his debts ; he is too much ashamed

of himself. The other day he made enquiries of the doctors as to Nora's exact condition, and since then he has been gambling as though Haxtroden and half the world besides already belonged to him; but in spite of all, he still remains my mother's darling; from babyhood upwards she has always had an indescribable tenderness for him.

To-day, when my mother wished to go in to Nora, the nurse prevented her from doing so by saying that her patient was asleep, whereas I had only just that minute heard her talking. This was a new light for me. So Nora does not like my mother; she only bears with her because she is obliged to do so. I resolved, however, to make quite sure of this.

"I suppose my mother is rather too lively for an invalid?" I said to Nora.

"Yes, she talks a good deal, and asks a great many questions, and often I cannot imagine who has told her some of the things that she questions me about." A suspicious glance at me accompanied these words.

"Well, you know," I said, "in fever one tells all sorts of wild stories, and then afterwards people want to know whether there was any truth in them or no."

Nora started up. "I talked, did I? What did I say, then? Oh, do, do tell me what I said."

"Nothing, except what might come from a tender, pure, and loving heart," I replied.

She cast down her eyes with a troubled, anxious expression, and from time to time gazed at me searchingly and curiously. There was an old, old look in her haggard face at that moment that seemed to me scarcely human.

"Your mother is always wanting to talk with me about the child, and I cannot talk of it!" she said, after a short pause, and her lips trembled visibly.

"Don't you think," I said, "that it is better not to talk about our greatest sorrows? Don't you think that if we are silent we are able to bear them more patiently?"

"I am not sure," she said. "Perhaps they might heal more quickly if we did talk of them, just as a wound heals more quickly under the touch of lunar caustic. But one has not always sufficient courage to undergo such an ordeal."

"Yes," I replied, "but there are certain wounds that one prefers to leave unhealed, for fear of becoming quite numb and petrified if freed from the

quickening influences of the pain that accompanies them."

She looked at me again, a profound, searching look, as though she were trying to sound me to the very depths. I bore the look, however, with great composure.

*September 8th.*—My brother has arrived here with his wife and child, and is engaged in shooting my deer. I have invited my friend Hermann in the hope of somewhat enlivening the long and painful period of Nora's convalescence. He comes and sits beside me near Nora's sofa, where she lies stretched at full length, and almost motionless; then tells all sorts of anecdotes in his hearty, cheery fashion. My brother is not best pleased at having to share the pleasures of the chase with him, and Hermann is not particularly fond of my sister-in-law, who has rather vulgar tastes and ideas, and who makes an idol, and at the same time a tyrant, of her little child.

It certainly showed great lack of tenderness and kindly feeling on her part to parade her child under our very eyes just at this time. I have forbidden her to bring it again into my wife's room. When she brought it in to show it to Nora for the first time, she

actually placed it at my wife's very feet. Nora began to play with it most sweetly and kindly, and continued to do so until she suddenly fell back in a swoon. When she recovered consciousness, she fell into violent hysterics.

I was so angry with my brother that I lost all command of my temper, but one might just as well be angry with a broomstick. He merely made humorous remarks, after his usual fashion, and remained as utterly devoid of feeling as though all that I were saying were no concern of his. Hermann shared in my anger, and that was some little relief and consolation to me.

My other brother also wishes to come here; he wants to take part in the shooting, the rascal. After what has passed between us, I cannot conceive how he can have the audacity to make his appearance under my roof.

*September 19th.*—The days glide by wearily. There seems to be no improvement in Nora's health. It is just as though some heavy burden were weighing on her mind that no power on earth can remove. Today I questioned my mother very closely, for, just after she had left her, I found my wife greatly excited,

crying bitterly, and in a painfully weak and exhausted condition.

For a long while my mother would tell me nothing, but at length I forced her to confess that she had thought over Nora's delirious ravings until she had established some connection between them in her own mind, and had just been putting my wife through a cross-examination in regard to them.

I am afraid that when I heard this I did not behave as a son should behave to his mother, for she began to weep and to tremble under the torrent of reproaches that I poured upon her. She asked me whether I could not forgive the over-anxiety of a loving mother's heart. I answered, "No!" I told her that she had no right to seek to know the meaning of the delirious confessions of my poor, unconscious wife; that she ought to have done her best to forget them, and that above all she ought never to have repeated to Nora what had been uttered in the wild ravings of delirium.

"I cannot comprehend you, mother," I cried; "you have always taught me to be discreet, and now you yourself act in this fashion. But, mother, how could you—how could you do such a thing?"

"Will you, then, rob me of my right to watch over

you?" she said. "Are you then no longer my child?"

"I wish that it were so," I answered; "I wish you had never brought me into the world, mother! You gave me a fatal gift when you gave me existence."

She wept, and I remained hard and cold. My rage was so great that it shook and tore me like a hurricane, and now I feel as shattered and dead as though I were a piece of ore whence all metal has been poured out in a molten, fiery stream. I have the miserable feeling that a woman has trembled before me, and that woman my own mother.

But she ought not to have done this! She ought never to have done it! Had it not been for her, Nora would never have known of what she raved about in her delirium; now the knowledge of it will always be a torture to her, and will certainly not tend to improve the relations between us. When in health my wife has such perfect tact, and knows how to govern her every word and look, that she must feel deeply humiliated at having told our painful secret as it were to all the four winds. She looked anxiously from me to my mother; noticed that I did not speak to this latter, and became so deathly pale, I thought she was

going to faint. She asked no questions, however, but she is suffering as before, from great pain and terrible exhaustion. I carried her to her bed, held her in my arms, and kissed her forehead and eyes ; she pressed my hands to her lips, and began to sob bitterly.

"Never mind, dear child !" I said. " Only try and be calm. Never mind; you are a dear angel ; you are incapable of doing anything wrong."

She kissed my hand repeatedly, and the rebellious tears would fall, however much she tried to force them back.

" We are both very unhappy," she said ; " but our sorrow springs from such different sources that it is impossible for us to share the burden of it, and so we must be silent."

" The sight of such conjugal happiness as yours is certainly most touching, and puts us to shame," said my sister-in-law, when we had all assembled round Nora's couch after dinner. " I suppose," she continued, " you have never had a quarrel ? "

" No, never," I replied ; " and, what is more, we never intend to have one ! "

" Dear me, but such harmony is something too wonderful ! The disputes I have with Edouard ! He

tells me that I annoy him so, and I tell him he is such a tyrant, and then we have an awful quarrel, and then we make it up again so prettily. But with you two, there seems to be the peace of heaven itself!"

"Does there not?" I answered.

My mother looked down into her lap, and Nora made little knots in her handkerchief with her white, trembling hands; my brother Max whistled softly to himself, and looked first at Nora, then at me, while Edouard laughed aloud.

"Yes, we quarrel so fearfully that sometimes we are on the point of throwing the knives and forks at one another's heads; we have already borrowed all the books in the library for this purpose; the only resource now left to us is to use our fists. It will be great fun: we have not the least notion yet which of us will get the better of the other in a hand-to-hand fight."

"For shame, Edouard!" said my mother.

He came behind her chair and threw his arm round her neck.

"We are going to be very good, very good indeed," he said, in the peculiar, caressing tone with which he has always been able to coax my mother into doing

whatever he wished, and my sister-in-law laughed, and said :—

“ Oh yes, that is always his way : when he pleases, he can be as gentle as a lamb, and no one has the heart to be angry with him then. But he does not in the least deserve your forgiveness, dear mamma. He is a great, lazy fellow, a good-for-nothing, frivolous creature ! ”

And how tenderly and lovingly she looked at him as she said this, and how proudly my handsome, frivolous brother gazed down at her, although he had told me only that morning that unless I would assist him in his money difficulties, the only thing remaining for him to do was to send a bullet through his head.

“ Take me away from here,” whispered Nora to me this evening.

“ Yes,” I answered ; “ that I will. You can’t bear the life here, child. Where shall we go ? ”

“ Oh, anywhere where it is warm, and where there are no people ! ”

Again the lips began to tremble as though she were about to cry. My strong-minded wife has become as weak and hysterical as a little child. I am writing

this in an atmosphere of the most perfect solitude and external tranquillity. I do not intend to go to bed this night. I have passed many such hours lately, lying on the black fur rug in front of the fireplace in my studio, where I take care to keep a small fire burning. I can sleep best on the floor, and in a room that is not in complete darkness. Night and bed are the enemies of the wretched. In the studio my heart is more at rest, for there I am surrounded by traces of my former industry, and of the creative power of happier days, and although these things have been fatally blighted and well-nigh killed in me, I am glad not to lose all memory of them.

My diary is a sort of consolation to me ; at any rate, my mind is active while I am writing ; although my pen no longer serves me in higher intellectual labour. At least during that time I am able to pace up and down and about the room at my will ; on the thick soft carpet not even my own footstep can disturb me. I rack my brains in trying to imagine what I ought to do in order to build up the edifice that is called conjugal happiness. In what, then, does such happiness consist ? It is as ambiguous a word as was the fatal riddle of the Sphinx ; like that, it is likewise a riddle

for which one can scarcely find the solution, and which means death for those who are unable to solve it.

My child has died before the terrible question could be put to her. It is well for her. . . . And I wish to put an end to my life, because she is dead?

With my deep and passionate love I would have shielded her from all sorrow and evil—yes, just like my own mother, whose anxious love for me has blighted all my hopes, and wrecked my life, and who never tries to further my happiness but she plunges me into greater misery.

*September 27th.*—I am beginning to find a certain sweetness in my lonely nights. There is, in a sense, a slackening of the intolerable tension of the whole day, and even if I am unable to sleep, I enjoy a period of comparative rest.

Nora has just suffered a slight relapse. In the midst of her pain she begged me not to be angry with my mother.

“Just think,” she said, “she might die to-morrow, and then, suppose you were not reconciled to her! Besides, we are soon going away, are we not?”

When my mother entered, I went up to her, said “Good morning,” and kissed her hand. She,

however, had no tender looks or words for me—she reserves all these for my brother—and to Nora she was as cold in her manner as though the relapse had been a crime, a little comedy got up in order to alienate me from my dear parent. Evidently we are both in her bad graces.

"I have only come because it is my duty, and for the sake of appearances," she said, in freezing tones.

It would have been far better had she neglected this duty, for her presence only tends to excite Nora most painfully.

*October 1st.*—In the quietude and stillness of night I sometimes take out Lavinia's portrait like a thief who likes to have a quiet look at his hidden treasure. There is surely no sin in looking at it? Sometimes I place it on the ground, so as to let the light from the fire play upon it, and then I lie down in front of it, and gaze at it for hours together. I wonder if she is dead? I trust she is. She must surely either be dead, or else be very near death, after such terrible illness. And, therefore, I may look at her portrait sometimes; there can be no sin in doing so. Her image is to me like a breeze from Paradise, wafting

me back to the old days when I still believed in love and happiness, in my talents, and in my future !

*October 5th.*—I am still trembling in all my limbs. I had once more placed Lavinia's picture in front of me, and had become absorbed in the contemplation of it. All at once I heard a slight movement, and, looking round, I perceived Nora gliding in her long night-dress towards the curtain. I saw her lift up the curtain softly, without the slightest noise, and disappear, and near me, on the carpet, I perceived her pocket-handkerchief. So she must have been standing close to me, looking at the painting for some time, and I knew nothing of this, for I lay with my face buried in my arms, weeping. As for the little handkerchief, all wet with tears, I have locked it up in a safe place ; Nora shall never find out that she was seen by me. I will take good care never to bring out Lavinia's picture again, unless after having carefully locked all the doors ; but if I lock them now, she will know that I have seen her. My heart is throbbing so violently that I can distinctly hear it beating. And people talk of ghosts ! I would rather all the inhabitants of Hell itself had been dancing round me than have seen what I have seen this

night, and I know that as long as I live I shall never be able to forget the sight.

Nora was bare-footed. Her little feet were just visible under her night-dress, which she held up ever so little, so as not to tread upon it. Perhaps she has met her death this night. How long, I wonder, had she been standing there? How softly and silently she must have wept! And at the first motion on my part she fled. How long can I have been lying there? It is now three o'clock. A very long time, at all events. I would fain contemplate another picture, the portrait of my little daughter that I painted for myself as she lay almost enveloped in flowers. In the exquisite little face there is abundant peace, but my own heart is so utterly devoid of comfort that I feel as though, even were I at the very gates of Paradise, I should turn away, driven back by a curse like that which rested on the Wandering Jew.

I have made Nora wife and mother, I have robbed her of all joy and peace and health, and have made her as unhappy as it is possible for any woman to be made. Now she is neither wife nor mother, and can never again bring a child into the world. This, this

is all my doing. Oh, God ! be merciful to me, a poor sinner !

Beethoven's "Hymn of Repentance" keeps on sounding in my ears, and especially the grand finale, with its promise of pardon. Is there, then, really a Divine Mercy ? I do not believe it. I believe there is nothing but pain and torment.

My friend Hermann sees that I am suffering, and tries to help and comfort me. He coaxes me to go out with him into the woods, and there we talk over our old wild student days, recall all the mad pranks we used to play together. He is so full of kindness and tenderness that he helps me to bear the life here, in spite of mother, sister-in-law, and brothers, who certainly do not try to make my existence easier to me.

Sometimes it seems to me as though I must relieve my mind by confessing everything to Hermann, but I have no longer any right to do this : I am a married man.

Evidently it was Nora's intention to come to me in the night and comfort me, when she found me gazing at Lavinia's picture. My poor wife ! I know well that she will never come again. I might place

Lavinia's picture every night in the same place, for Nora will never come again; but I have not the heart to do so, for now it has no longer any consolation for me—now it only serves to remind me of my wife's cruel agony.

*October 6th.*—Timidly and anxiously I entered Nora's room this morning. She received me with perfect good humour and amiability, said she had slept well and had been thinking over a good route for our journey. Such a restless spirit as myself must soon suffer from depression, she declared, unless each day afforded some fresh amusement or interest.

Were it not that I have the little handkerchief safely locked up in my writing-table, I should be forced to believe that last night I had seen a vision.

Nora seems to have lost all trace of feebleness, and to all appearance is now as self-possessed, as calm and resolute as she used to be before her illness. She talks of the books that we must read together, of the picture galleries that we must visit, although she tells my mother jestingly that to-day she is not able to walk; she even teases my brothers, and begs my sister-in-law to let her see her child. I believe I would far rather have seen her shed a flood of tears. She has

locked the door of her heart against me, and who knows whether she will ever open it again. If any one is ignorant of how much self-control a woman is capable, let him come and visit us, and see—my wife.

“But how is it that you are unable to walk to-day ?” said my mother. “Several days ago you were able to walk.”

I listened anxiously.

“I tried to get up early this morning, feeling rested after a good night, but I fell back in bed, exhausted. It is quite absurd to be still feeling so weak !” And as she said this Nora became deathly pale, and her eyes looked extraordinarily large, albeit her mouth smiled.

My wife is indeed a heroine, and her courage puts me to shame. I have just unlocked the secret drawer in my writing-table, and have been looking at the little handkerchief: it was becoming so very difficult to me to resist the impression that I was under some hallucination. I can scarcely endure the knowledge of what happened last night; even on the rug in my studio I can find no rest. I feel like the moth which is now buzzing round my lamp: every other moment

it falls on the carpet and begins to rub its scorched feet and its transparent wings, evidently in great pain, but, nevertheless, back it flies again, until at last it has burnt its wings to nothing, cannot even crawl, and writhes about in such agony that I can no longer bear the sight of its torments, and compassionately crush it to death. How easy it is to crush an insect to death! In a second it has become dust, less than dust, and all torment is at end—but I am no moth. My life was in my own hands, and I have thoughtlessly and carelessly misused and misspent it. Human beings are not crushed so easily.

It seems to me as though I could not be permitted to die before I have redeemed, even to the very last iota, the wrong I have done to Nora.

My wings are scorched so that I shall never again be able to fly, and as for my feet, if they will just enable me to walk, it is all that I can expect of them.

## CHAPTER IV.

*October 8th.*—Nora joined us in the drawing-room to-day for the first time since her illness. Her hair begins to show itself again in little curls under her cap, not, however, with the luxuriant growth of perfect convalescence.

Her eyes look unnaturally large, as if she had suffered much from sleeplessness, although she always maintains that she has slept remarkably well. For my part I am unable to tell such direct untruths : I openly confess that I sleep but very little. At times I feel horrified at the rapidity with which Nora is ageing, but immediately afterwards I am tortured by renewed pangs of conscience—I feel that it is I who have wrecked and injured her health. Sometimes I ask myself what would have happened had I hastened after her on that fatal night, and had we talked over everything together. But I cannot discuss such matters

with her. It is, perhaps, unpardonable weakness on my part, but I cannot.

The only thing that gives me any peace or comfort is to occupy myself during the long nights in writing. And when I shall be gone, I shall have taken good care that, as a widow, she shall have sufficient fortune to be quite independent, to travel, to buy books, to do whatever she may fancy. Her life will not be utterly miserable. Now that I know our departure to be very near, and feel that I shall soon be living the wretched hotel life which I detest, I am perfectly revelling in the long nights that I spend alone in my studio. But she wishes to travel, she longs to be away from here. And seeing that I have made her life so unbearable, I owe it to her to take her to the very end of the world, if it should be her wish to go so far.

I have a perfect dread of spending many months amid noise, discomfort and confusion, and of consulting various strange doctors, not one of whom will be able to do my poor Nora any good, because not one of them will know the real cause of the gnawing pain that is wasting her life and strength. I shudder at the thought of the coming months, more especially if I

am still to suffer from insomnia, scarcely endurable even in the still, peaceful atmosphere of my favourite haunt—my studio.

BADEN, *October 28th.*

We have come here, and at present there seems but little probability of our getting any further. Nora is very much exhausted by the journey, although we accomplished it in easy stages. She wishes to make the acquaintance of several people who are staying here, and to hold a small drawing-room sometimes, as she lies on her sofa ; she thinks this will be a distraction for us both. The society here is of a very cosmopolitan character : perhaps that is just what will please her. I thought she would be sure to wish to go to England, but it appears she has relatives there, whom she would much rather forget.

*November 8th.*—I wander about here like a wretched spirit that can find no rest ; I long for home. Nora has already collected a circle of acquaintances round her, so that I am free to wander for hours together in the woods, under the tall pine-trees, in the mild air that makes one feel as though it were summer time. Under these influences I now and then get a little sleep.

People here find Nora highly clever and intellectual, and congratulate me on my good fortune in possessing such a wife ; but at the same time they express their sorrow at her shattered health.

*November 18th.*—The weather continues perfect. I spend much of my time near the old castle, lying in some solitary corner among the ruins. I am so exhausted by excess of emotion and anxious thought, that I should like, of all things, to cease for a while either to think or to feel. I should like to become a mere animal.

*November 25th.*—Help me, ye gods ! Lavinia is here ! And I must not, I dare not go mad ! I dare not go and meet her publicly before all the world, for, if I did, I should at once be hunted and driven back by conscience, only to become even more wretched than I am at present.

There was a thick fog all yesterday which invested the tall pines with spectral draperies ; all the leaves were dripping with moisture, and the wood filled with sounds of the rippling and trickling of falling water.

I was sauntering slowly towards the wood, and, without purposing to walk in any particular direction, took by chance a turning that led through the trees.



On a sudden I perceived a sketch-book lying on the ground, and near it a camp-stool. Who might have been drawing here, and who might be the possessor of the sketch-book? I went a few paces further, and waited in order to see who should come. I heard a light footstep and the rustle of a woman's dress, and there, coming out of the thick fog, and quite close to me, was Lavinia!

For one moment we stared at each other, speechless, and then, with a soft "Ah!" we sank into each other's arms. We were powerless to utter a word: we could only listen to the beating of our own hearts, we could only feel our unutterable happiness. I was forced to lean against a tree in order not to sink under her light weight. She pressed her handkerchief to her lips: it was stained with ruby drops.

"What! again!" I cried.

She freed herself from my embrace, and stared at me, horror-stricken.

"You have—seen this—this—already?" she asked, her lips contracted with an expression of such pain, and her beautiful nostrils quivering with such violent emotion that for a minute I was unable to answer, unable to collect my thoughts.

My eyes sank before her glance, and I stammered :—  
“ Yes, I saw you in Lucerne, when I was on my wedding journey.”

“ And also in Zurich ? ”

“ No, I had no idea that you were there, and only heard long afterwards that you had been seen there.”

“ Who told you, then ? ”

“ My wife.”

We gazed silently at each other for some time.

“ How is it that you are so unhappy, Jannino ? ” she asked suddenly.

“ Because I am unable to forget Sorrento.”

Now it was her turn to cast down her eyes.

“ It is you who have spoiled my life, Lavinia,” I said ; “ if I am unhappy it is your fault.”

She still kept her eyes fixed on the ground.

“ I have borne a more bitter grudge against you, Lavinia, than against any creature in this world.”

“ Have I not then been sufficiently punished ? ” she said, without lifting her eyes.

“ How am I to know ? ” I said, in a hard tone.

“ Oh, Jannino ! ” She clasped her hands.

“ You were once my flower, my saint, my jewel, my sunbeam ! ” I said passionately. “ It was you

who made my life valuable and beautiful. You were everything, everything to me ! ”

“ Oh, why should you torture me with these reproaches now,” she said, “ now that all is at an end between us ? When I lay ill and in despair in Sorrento, you used to be so good and kind, Jannino, and no reproach ever passed your lips ! You seemed to me then like my better angel ! ”

I was ashamed of my outbreak of passion : it was almost as though I had meant to make her answerable for all the misery I had endured of late. And yet I did not wish her to perceive that I had suffered : I tried to appear hard and stern and cold : I wanted to punish her for all that she had caused me to suffer, and she disarmed me with one word. “ You seemed to me then like my better angel ! ”

And what had I become since that time ? To think that hers should be the lips to remind me of my old self !

“ I have endeavoured to become worthy of you, Jannino,” she said. “ I have become a painter ; I live in Paris, and I work from early morning till night. I have a great deal to do, and am just at present on a visit to friends here, so as to get a little rest.”

I could have groaned aloud. A life spent with her would have been Paradise. Enthusiastically I began to picture to myself our studio, with her figure there, we two painting, singing; so happy, so unutterably happy! I gnashed my teeth in the bitterness of my regret, while Lavinia began to relate to me how she began to learn the art of painting, some time ago, in order to get away from her aunt, and be independent. She had possessed more strength of mind and will than I. She had given drawing lessons, so as to be able to earn her own living and be free, and afterwards she had painted portraits, and these had soon brought in money. She has always had the power of doing almost anything to which she put her hand. People willingly had their portraits painted by the handsome lady artist, more especially, as she told me with an arch smile, because she usually painted them better-looking than they really were.

She talked earnestly and fluently, and we neither of us noticed how rapidly the time was passing, and how the fog had gradually dispersed, until at length the sun burst through and enveloped all things in a haze of brilliant splendour. With the wonderfully fine tact that she has always had, she took care to ask me very

little about myself. We promised each other to meet here daily.

*December 18th.*—I have very little to relate to my diary, for I tell everything to Lavinia, and find rest and peace in doing so. Our rôles are changed. She has become my confessor, and leans down lovingly and tenderly from the summit of her supreme and holy elevation, in order, like the sweetest of sisters, to give me comfort and support.

*January 12th.*—We meet each other in the snow, and wander hither and thither. She has even taught me how to sleep again. The fearful tension has slackened at last ; since Lavinia has fed my soul with warmth and reciprocity and deep sympathy, I no longer feel the coolness that exists between my wife and myself.

*February 10th.*—Had I not sworn to myself to observe the most rigorous truth in writing this journal, I would put down nothing to-day.

For two, three days Lavinia had not come to our place of meeting, and so at last, tortured with anxiety, I resolved to go in search of her. I found the villa where she was staying, and did not have myself announced, but, giving another name, asked to be

conducted to her room. As I opened the door, she sprang up from her couch, on which she was lying, dressed, and flew towards me. I tried to fold her in my arms. She, however, only stretched out her hands and lowered her head. In that moment we were both overcome by memories of the past. Her chamber was filled with the same aroma as in Sorrento: flowers were everywhere, especially violets. Her hair was all dishevelled with lying down, and her cheeks were flushed.

"And so you have come to me?" she said.

"May I not come and see how you are?" I asked softly, and drew her forcibly towards me, so that her forehead rested on my shoulder. I was determined that she should look into my eyes.

"Lavinia!" I said, "had you not forgotten me?"

A quick glance. "I forget! Oh, my God!" Again she let her head sink upon my breast. "I have been dying with longing after you, Jannino!"

"Ah, child, you have caused me such cruel pain that I am obliged to doubt you, even while I hold you in my arms!"

She sank upon her knees.

"Kill me if it please you, but believe in me! With

what, then, can I be sufficiently true if my lips lie, and my eyes lie, and my beating heart lies? Tell me, with what can I be true?"

I lifted her up again. She trembled like an aspen leaf.

"Ah! child, child! If only you could be mine! I would guard you and protect you, and enwrap you in my love, so that no unkind glance might annoy you. Oh, if you were only mine!"

"I am yours, with my whole soul," she whispered. "But of what use to tell you so if you will not believe it? I have learnt to look up to you as to something unapproachable, something holy, Jannino! How can I speak to you of love?"

I have no longer any knowledge of what I said to her, of what I heard her say. I only know that I loved her madly; ah! not in the least like a "pure angel," but quite in an earthly fashion, and with all that is good and bad in my nature. And I felt compelled to tell her this, and to drag her with me into the wild flood of my passionate love. For me there was no longer any outer world, nor any time, nor any human beings save we two, nor any past—only a mighty, all powerful, soul-stirring present, only a

breaking-down of all the boundaries which should by rights never have been broken down—which had it not been for our misdoings, for our destiny, would never have been set up. It seemed as though, in the vortex of that fatal passion that had already gnawed at my heart's core, and sapped the very springs of my being, all landmarks were torn down and effaced.

At last I came to my senses, and then a terrible sensation of shame pierced my heart suddenly like a sharp dagger. I thrust from me the woman whom I had only just been embracing in a rapture of passion, and cried, almost in a threatening tone :—

“Lavinia! What have you made of me? Go away! Go away from here! Never in my life will I see you again! It must be at an end between us for ever, Lavinia!”

She became pale as death.

“Go away from here!” I said, harshly.

“Jannino!”

“I shall be forced to despise myself if my eyes look on you again! Go away! I am a miserable wretch!”

I had sunk into an arm-chair. She threw herself on her knees beside me; her large, tearless eyes gazed upon me.

"Am I then so utterly unworthy of you, Jannino?"

"No; it is I who am miserable and unworthy! All my grand struggle and all my heroism have become in this hour as dust and ashes. Go away! I have a wife, Lavinia!"

"I have always obeyed you, my master," she said, almost inaudibly.

"Did I not love you so madly," I said, "I should hate you as I hate myself."

"Hate me but do not forget me!"

She let her bowed head rest on my hands, and her tears trickled through my fingers.

"It is my fault!" she groaned. "Oh, Jannino, once it happened that you left me: my ruin was the result, and yet I forgave you! And now it is I who am forced to leave you; I feel that I shall die in consequence, and nevertheless I forgive you. But you, you must try to bear me no grudge for having twice crossed your path, only to bring you sorrow and wretchedness!"

"Oh, Lavinia, you have made of me a worthless, purposeless creature! May God forgive you for it! Like some malignant demon you have blighted and consumed my best impulses and aspirations, and

now I wander through life without purpose, without hope, without ambition ! Go away ! or I shall curse you ! ”

And even as she knelt at my feet, I left her, and went away, raging. I never even turned round to look back at her. I hurried into the woods, and kept listening to hear whether she were not coming after me. I thought she must surely have followed me, and yet I said to myself that I never wished to see her again as long as I lived. It seemed to me as though I hated her, and yet as though my heart must break unless I kept her near me.

At what hour I returned home I know not ; it was dark night, and all was calm and still. As I did not wish to arouse anyone, I returned to the woods, all covered with glistening snow ; up and down the hills I wandered through shady thickets, through moonlit valleys ; the scared game fled before me ; now and then some large bird of night grazed my fevered forehead as it flitted past. I wandered up and down in this silent world like an unhappy soul that has for ever forfeited eternal peace ; I, who although alive in the ordinary sense of the word, was dead to all that makes life really worth living ;

the mere shadow of my former self, chained to life by guilt and repentance, by weakness, folly, and unreason. I cursed God for having created me with a soul filled with insatiable thirst after all that is beautiful, but with a will too weak to curb my passions.

Were not all the waters turned to ice, I should have drowned myself then and there. I thought of allowing myself to freeze to death, but I was unable to remain quiet for a sufficient length of time. I felt impelled to wander restlessly up and down, up and down, as though hell were behind me ; no, not hell, but all my long, wasted, blackened life !

The next day I was seized with such a passionate longing to see Lavinia that I again called upon her. She had gone away. She had actually gone away. This was in accordance with my expressed wish to her, but, all the same, the news stunned me like a thunderbolt.

It seemed to me as if, without her, I must die of sorrow and pain. I ran about in the woods like a madman. Was she aware that I should die of longing after her ? Is she a siren, who clouds the senses of

men, or was it merely that she wished to obey me implicitly, in order to prove to me the extent and the depth of her love?

For the first time since we have come to Baden I found Nora rather vexed with me for having stayed away from her so long.

“I had thought to make your life pleasant by having society here,” she said, “and now you are always away !”

“I cannot endure life in hotels.”

“Then let us go home.”

“Oh, no ! not home—anywhere rather than home !” I was frightened at the thought of solitude, of being alone with my own haunting conscience.

Man is a great fool, incapable of forming any correct judgment as to the nature and the amount of matter that he may be able to digest ; hence he should never do anything the after-consequences of which he will be unable to endure. Light and frivolous natures, however, may be able to make terms with conscience, but with me this would be impossible. I ought to have reflected on this beforehand. My wife interrupted my thoughts as usual.

"But what is to be done for you, then?" she said.

"Give me a little freedom, that is all. I am such a restless creature, and travelling is bad for you just now."

"Really," said Nora, "to understand you is beyond all human skill."

"I cannot even understand myself."

"Because you have no strength of will, not even so much as a little child."

"In everything I have been accustomed to abandon myself unreservedly to my various moods, but since I have been unable to do this, my talent has died, and my pen gone lame."

"In my estimation, strength of will is of far greater value than mere talent."

"Until now," I replied, "I had always regarded talent as the special gift of God. I suppose I have been mistaken."

"But what is the use of talent if the one who possesses it be devoid of moral worth?"

"You are severe, Nora!"

"I am true, and you are not."

Without answering a word I left the room, and we

did not meet again until dinner-time. She was then as calm and as amiable as though no angry words had passed between us, and appeared to have quite forgotten my wish to leave Baden. She carelessly informed me that her doctor was sending her to Freiburg for treatment.

## CHAPTER V.

*Como, February 27th.*

I AM alone for a short time, having been sent here by the same doctor who advises my wife to remain for the present in Freiburg. I am consumed with longing after Lavinia, and am suffering terrible pangs of conscience.

I have no news of her. Perhaps she is ill. I spend my days on the sea, rowing my own boat, and I lie sometimes for hours gazing up into the sky. A resolution is slowly—but very slowly—ripening in my mind, and when it has been carried into effect, it is very possible that I shall regret it. For some time past I have not known the meaning of happiness; everything that I do bears some evil consequence: I suffer perpetual martyrdom, perpetual pangs of conscience, and I long for liberty as any galley-slave might long for his freedom.

*March 10th.—*My resolution has ripened into a veri-

table act. I have written to Nora to ask her whether we had not better make each other a mutual present of our freedom. The letter is gone, and my heart throbs as it never throbbed before. I told her that we should never be able to understand each other, and that therefore it would be better if we separated.

Perhaps once more I have done an unwise thing. I seem to have quite lost all power of forming any correct judgment in the important affairs of life. It seems to me as though in my relations towards her I were a perjured creature, as though I should be acting dishonourably did I not set her free. It is possible that I am a burden to her, and yet that she, with her severe sense of duty, might never speak the word that would effect her own deliverance.

*March 24th.*—I waited and waited, and no answer came. I was in the greatest anxiety of mind. I spent my days in wandering about the neighbourhood, and my nights on the lake in my boat. I began to think that my letter must have been lost, and to ask myself whether I had not best write another. Yesterday evening I returned home. There stood Nora herself, in my room. She looked full at me with her large eyes.

"No, Ewald, I will never yield my place to a profligate. I know all ! I have been back to Baden, and have been making inquiries there. She was there and you saw her daily—that is enough. You are not aware, I presume, that she has a bad reputation ? They even say that she has had a child. That is no fitting wife for my Ewald. You will be angry with me for a time, but some day I know that you will be grateful to me for having protected you from her. You need never have married me had she been so very dear to you, you know. If you have lied to me and deceived me, it is your own affair, but since you *have* made me your wife, it is my intention to retain that title."

I sank into a chair, and answered not a word. I had said nothing whatever in my letter about any other woman. I imagined that in writing only of Nora's happiness and unhappiness, I had worded it most cautiously. But who could keep any secret from those eyes of hers ?

"I know," she continued ; "it is the same Italian woman who was at Zurich. I have had her described to me ; it is the same woman whom you once knew in Sorrento. This woman was at Baden, and she is gone away from there, I know not whither. You have

always managed to meet her. But she is not worthy of you. She has other loves beside you, believe me. Do not start: you have not such sharp eyes as I, and therefore I must keep watch over you. And even if you should hate me now, Ewald, some day you will confess that you owe to me your happiness and peace of mind—some day you will thank me for having preserved you from great shame and sorrow, for having kept your name untarnished!"

I arose and went to the window. At that moment the moon floated over the distant hills, and its beams were reflected on the lake. The scent of myrtle and violet was wafted towards me, as though to tempt and ensnare me. Oh, that I were lying out there under the chill waves! Oh, that my burning, seething brain had become dead and still!—that the raging heart in my bosom had ceased for ever to beat!

For a long time we were both silent. At last I turned towards Nora; as she stood there, the moon illuminated both face and figure. Her nostrils were rather more sharply dilated than usual, her lips tightly pressed together, and there was a flame in her eyes that signified her capacity for hating with the hatred of death itself; both hands were firmly planted on the

table. She looked as terror-inspiring as any Norne. I looked again towards the lake.

"As you please," I said at last.

"Do you see, Ewald?" she said. "I love you so, that I will joyfully bear any suffering that comes to me from your hand. Already through you I have had much, very much to bear."

Her voice grew more soft and tender in its tones as she spoke.

"And for the sake of all the suffering I have had to endure, you must try and bear with me patiently, and without murmuring at your fate. If we only have sufficient strength of will, we surely may yet make of our lives something beautiful, useful, noble—something rich in resignation, forbearance and peace."

She still retained the same attitude, and spoke softly—very softly, and yet very distinctly.

"I am not worthy of you."

"But if I consider you worthy of me, that is enough."

Had she only become angry, I could also have given way to anger; but although her eyes glittered like the wave lit by vague gleams of phosphorescence, she herself seemed every moment to grow more calm and

composed. I tried to look into those steely orbs, but turned away again towards the distant moon that illuminated my own face with its peaceful, silvery beams. The distant heights were wrapped in sombre gloom, while in the foreground every object shone bright and clear in sharpest outlines. A boat was rocking softly to and fro; the waves glimmered as they bathed its keel; in the boat a man was lying at full length, singing to himself a song that seemed to have no end and no beginning.

“I shall never make a good husband.”

“Good enough for me.”

“You do not know my wild, stormy nature.”

“I will undertake to tame it,” she said, and her words, softly as they were spoken, sounded in my ears like a threat.

At that moment the waiter entered, bearing lights, and began to lay the cloth for our evening meal. She came up to me as I stood by the window and looked out with me silently into the night. My heart became still and cold as Luna’s face, but within it, black and deep as the lake beneath, was unutterable pain—pain so acute and intolerable that it could not even find relief in a sigh.

"Forgive me, Ewald!" she said, in a very soft whisper.

I was silent.

"You are far too noble to be associated with what is mean or ignoble. I cannot endure it."

"I am no longer anything."

"Only because your will is asleep, Ewald."

"I have no longer any will."

"Oh," said Nora, "you mean that the water below looks very black, and that you would like to put an end to your life. But you will not do such a cowardly deed as that. Through you I have lost everything, health and hope, joy and peace. Am I, then, worth so little in your eyes, that you will also rob me of a husband?"

"I have already suffered more remorse on your account than I can bear."

"Forgive me, Ewald!" Her voice trembled, and two large tears trickled slowly down her pale cheeks. They glittered in the moonlight.

FLORENCE, April 4th.

We are spending the best part of our days in the picture galleries; we sit for hours before each picture and analyse it. In the evening Nora reads aloud to

me from some history of the fine arts. She no longer speaks to me of her health, but her sunken cheeks tell a tale of acute, though silent suffering; and as for her eyes, they still reflect the same indomitable will, by dint of which she keeps both her own spirit and mine in subjection.

*April 12th.*—Yesterday when we were in the Medici's Vault, whom should I see coming towards me but my friend Hermann! Nora had secretly invited him. She is striving in every possible way to render my present existence endurable to me. How cheerfully Hermann talked! How light and how sound his heart is! He is certainly not tormented by remorse: no demon of forbidden love has gotten him in its clutches. It is strange! I feel in the humour to write something.

*April 15th.*—To-day I wrote all sorts of things, but destroyed them immediately. I have come to a standstill. The strings have snapped, the instrument is out of tune, and not a single note can be won from it.

*April 18th.*—It was very clever of Nora to invite a friend here, so that she and I need not be always sitting alone, face to face. Our conversation has

become much more cheerful and animated in consequence, and Hermann suspects nothing. He perceives that I am often unhappy and out of spirits, but lays this entirely to the account of the sorrow that I have recently undergone, and to my feeling of hopelessness in regard to the delicate state of my wife's health. His pleasant society is the only thing that makes my life endurable to me just now.

NICE, *May 16th.*

We are on the way to Paris. It was Nora herself who suggested going there: if she only knew who is living there, she certainly would not have been so imprudent. I faintly suggested that we had better return by Switzerland, but she insisted on Paris.

“ You shall revel in music there ! ” she said to me, and she added this as gravely and earnestly as though her words signified something very different from pleasure and enjoyment. Naturally, for music to her is an abomination.

PARIS, *June 10th.*

We are here. My heart beats painfully. Tomorrow I shall go and seek out Lavinia. I am in a state of such intense excitement that I can scarcely write.

PARIS, June 13th.

I am still alive, in spite of the terrible agony I have endured. And I am not mad, for I understand what I am writing.

After searching for some time, I succeeded in finding Lavinia's place of residence. I rang the bell and asked to see her. The porter looked at me in a strange fashion, and asked me to follow him upstairs to the atelier. Of course I did so, and that speedily. Tremblingly I entered the room. All was quiet, solitary, deserted, empty, but on the easel was a large portrait of myself—a speaking likeness. I turned round. The porter was looking from my face to the portrait, and from the portrait back to my face.

"Where is the artist?" I asked him.

"What!" he said, "don't you know, then? A month ago all Paris was talking of it; she was then lying here in her coffin, and all the world poured in here to see her as she lay, surrounded by her pictures, and looking so very, very lovely. Her pictures have all been sold, except this one. On this she was working up to the very day of her death.—Angèle, Angèle!" he called down the stairs suddenly,

"bring some vinegar quickly—the gentleman has fainted!"

After that, for some time, I heard and saw nothing. It seemed to me as if I also were dead. Had they only allowed me to die!

*June 18th.*—To-day I mustered courage to go there again. I have hired the atelier, and now I am searching in it for any little scrap or speck that once belonged to her. I have tried to listen to what the people here can tell me about her, but I find I cannot bear it—I cannot bear it. Not a word of her writing can be found; there is only the portrait that stares at me incessantly and on which, with the last strength that she possessed, she wrote the record of her great love.

*June 20th.*—When I returned to the atelier, the portrait was gone. A lady had bought it, so the porter informed me; he did not know who she was. When I entered our sitting-room on my return, I found it there. I looked at Nora. She reddened, in spite of her pallor.

"Where did you find it?" I asked.

"I found it on your track."

"Did you know, then, who had painted it?"

"Certainly, and I also knew that she was dead."

“ You knew——”

“ It was in the newspapers; I have not hidden them; you might just as well have read them as I. I even supposed that you had read them, but that naturally you did not like to discuss this subject with me.”

“ And you wish to have this picture ? ”

“ Yes ; it is a striking likeness, and well painted.”

Again, as on that evening at Como, I saw that weird flash in her eyes. She hates, even after death, and thinks to torture me with that picture. That is her vengeance.

ETRETAT, *July 4th.*

The doctors have sent me to the seaside on account of my failing health. They said it would also be good for Nora. And so we are here. The great leviathan is thundering in the caverns of the rocks—hissing, foaming, raging, and I am lying up above on the cliffs, too feeble and exhausted even to wish to precipitate myself into the ocean beneath. I have, however, no occasion to do this. Death has already taken up his abode in my heart. I only need to wait patiently. I no longer even have the right to kill myself; to flee like a coward from the burden of

life, and from the duties of atonement and expiation that it holds in store for me.

“ You seemed to me like my better angel, Jannino ! ” Those words are always ringing in my ears. I hear them in the roaring of the sea, in the moaning of the wind, in the echoes of my own heart.

“ You seemed to me like my better angel, Jannino ! ” And then I could writhe in agony. How *could* I allow her to die alone, quite alone ? How is it that now I am obliged to bear such a heavy burden of guilt on my conscience ? Once on a time I was guiltless and pure ! I was free and happy. I was a poet ! Oh, dear heaven ! the time was when I was a singer, and I imagined that life itself could be more easily stifled within me than the power of song !

I have made my wife wretched, and consequently I have grown to hate her. I forsook the woman I loved, and sent her from me in scorn and anger. I killed my child. If the furies would only be silent, I could breathe freely. But at present they pursue me and trample on me, and I lie in the dust, defenceless, incapable of rising, incapable of closing my ears, incapable of flight.

Nora did indeed take a cruel and terrible revenge in quietly allowing me to go to Paris, although she knew very well what awaited me there. The shock has very nearly cost me my life, but even in that case Nora would have remained victor, and could have trampled upon all poor sinners !

What may have been her thoughts, in Paris, when I went out in search of Lavinia ? She did not show even the smallest sign of disquietude or restlessness. And when, after many hours of agony of soul, I returned home, and lay down, prostrate and exhausted; she never troubled me with any questions. She is an excellent surgeon, and her hand never trembles, even when she has to cut deep, very deep, into the quivering flesh. And she says she loves me !— Perhaps ? Perhaps that is love ! She has right on her side. She has defended herself to the uttermost, and now, with her firm little hand, she points out to me the path I should tread, and says :—“ There lies your duty.”

ETRETAT, *July 26th.*

We live here in the midst of an interesting circle, almost entirely composed of artists who have sought

out this quiet retired little spot in order to enjoy an interval of rest. My wife has already collected them around her. Alike by the seashore and at the table d'hôte she is ever the centre of conversation, and every one admires her keen and powerful intellect. I am usually a silent member of the group, but the mere act of listening soothes me and distracts my mind from painful thoughts. Sometimes, also, it occurs to me that by rights I also belong to this circle of artists—that, once upon a time, I also could create in the world of art.

*August 7th.*—I do not know who has betrayed the fact that I am able to sing. They actually forced me to sit down at the piano which they had secretly procured from Paris. Yesterday evening I sang all my songs to them, and afterwards I lay all night on the seashore, sobbing. The tide ebbed and flowed, the bosom of the vast ocean heaved and fell, it sobbed and groaned convulsively, and its deep voice murmured to me of all the sin and sorrow of this world, of the unceasing decay and death of all earthly things. Towards morning I fell asleep, and slept so soundly that I awoke to find the tide bathing my feet. Oh, why did it not bear me away while

I slept, instead of awakening me to another painful, weary day !

"Are you aware that you are an artist?" said one of the company to me to-day.

"I might possibly have become an artist."

"You will do so yet. Only you must work, you know."

"I am not in the least ambitious."

"So much the worse for you. Come and pass this winter with us in Paris, and you shall become famous."

"I will gladly go to Paris, but not for the purpose of producing any artistic creation ; my health is no longer equal to that."

#### *ETRETAT, August 4th.*

There is a saying in the East :—"If you have a great sorrow, go and lie down beside the water : the water will bear it away." But the vast ocean itself is powerless to alleviate my sorrow, to lift from off my shoulders the intolerable burden of my position. Nora has crushed me, and she knows it ; but, like all strong natures, she thinks it is far better to be crushed than that one's soul should suffer injury.

Incessantly my mind reviews those hours passed in Baden. I fancied that Lavinia would triumph because I had been unable to withstand her spell; but no, she went away quietly and submissively, and died of grief. And Nora knew that she had died! I feel absolutely frightened of my wife when I remember that she is capable of acting so cruelly and revengefully. In these days, however, she is most gentle and loving, thanks me for the smallest mark of consideration for her, and in general exerts no sort of pressure upon me. She very cleverly avoids being left alone with me, and she never asks, "Where have you been?" or, "Why did you go away?" even when I spend the night on the seashore. She must, however, know of this—she who always knows everything. Sometimes I fancy that I have taken leave of my senses. At such times I hear all manner of voices calling to me from the depths of the sea, and I see Lavinia's corpse come floating towards me on the waves, floating, floating—near, nearer, but it never quite succeeds in reaching me.

PARIS, December 20th.

Nora is living in picture galleries and lecture halls, collecting learned and talented people around her, and

making her life as full and as enjoyable as possible. I cannot refuse her my admiration. I am very often in the churchyard, still oftener in Lavinia's atelier, which I have had fitted up quite to my own taste. The bed on which she breathed her last breath belongs to me. They say that in the last days she scarcely ever took any rest, but was always painting, painting. It occurred to me to-day to search through my couch, and there I found a few words in her handwriting.

"God will surely have mercy on me for the sake of my great, great love. I did not wish to drag his proud heart in the dust: I could not bear that he should be humiliated in his own eyes by committing what he felt to be a sin, and therefore I left him. God, have mercy upon me, and admit me into thy Heaven! I have already passed through Hell and Purgatory, and I am so tired. I trust that I shall be dead, so that he can remain free from guilt, and can think of me without remorse, without a curse on his lips. Oh, God, grant that my suffering may soon be at an end! Very soon I shall have finished his portrait. When he comes he will find it here, and will know that up to the very last I belonged to him with

body and soul. Oh, God, preserve him from guilt and remorse ! grant him Thy peace ! ”

I felt as though holy angels were hovering around me, as though some pure hand had taken hold of mine, and were leading me out of the darkness and night towards the peace and rest of heaven. I kissed the sheet of paper ; I knelt down beside the bed on which she had died, and bowed my head over it.

I softly called her name many times, and thanked her fervently. She passed away without the least rancour or bitterness, with love, and love alone, in her heart.

The invincible siren became the angel of peace, illuminated and purified by love, and by love alone.

PARIS, *January 4th.*

Yesterday Nora procured a seat for me in the theatre of the Conservatory of Music.

“ You had better go there alone,” she said. “ I am so wanting in love for the divine art that I should only spoil your pleasure.”

So I went, and the music encompassed me and filled my soul like a divine atmosphere ; it sank deep into my sad heart, and lifted me up to those celestial heights



that are only accessible to heart and love. I can still enjoy, though I am no longer able to create.

I have had a piano placed in the atelier, and I am reading through numerous scores. Sometimes musicians come to me there, and sing me their opera quartettes. In the evening we always have society; often quite a brilliant assembly. My wife is always a shining star in these gatherings: no man in the circle is her equal in witty and brilliant conversation. Our soirées are very popular. Nora and I live together in peace. We never utter an unkind or unfriendly word. We are free from storms, as we are free from any touch of tenderness or affection. So that our life is not in any sense a lie, and each of us feels perfectly free and untrammelled.

BIARRITZ, November 8th.

Unfortunately we have both lost our good health and know not how to regain it.

There is a convent here for penitents. Some of these have built wooden barracks in the sand, by the side of the main building, and dwell there in tiny cells. They walk about in white woollen garments with hoods, under which not the smallest particle of the

face is visible. They never utter a word. My heart beat wildly at the thought that possibly Lavinia had hidden herself here—that I might be standing face to face with her without knowing it! It is just possible, I thought, that she only wished to make me believe she was dead, and that she is wandering here like some repentant shade of the nether world. And I, perhaps, am standing before her, myself a poor contrite sinner who has destroyed his own life and also that of two beings entrusted to his care, and has murdered his own child. And possibly there is nothing whatever to divide us, except a piece of thin tissue that serves to intercept our glances.

I was obliged to turn away suddenly, overpowered by a sort of vertigo. Supposing that I find it impossible to bear my life with Nora, and yet cannot feel that I am justified in committing suicide, it is just possible that I may turn Trappist!—What foolish, mad thoughts chase one another through a suffering brain! My noble Lavinia would not have hesitated for one instant to commit suicide rather than hide herself away from the cares and duties of life like a coward. To think that she, who was once in the service of art, could endure life here, in this sandy waste—a life of

silence and idleness!—oh, no, no! The doctors have advised me to spend all my winters in the South. God knows what is amiss with me!—I no longer trouble myself about the matter.

SORRENTO, *February 4th.*

I insisted on coming here, and Nora made no objection. I see, however, that I credited myself with greater powers of endurance than I really possess. The old sense of unrest begins to torment me. My wise wife suggests Algiers, and a beautiful return journey through Spain. She declares that she herself is quite equal to the fatigues of travelling. Hermann will accompany us.

PARIS, *June 24th.*

Algiers and Spain lie behind us: I feel more at peace near Lavinia's beloved grave. We have resumed our former mode of life here. I perceive, however, that my strength is growing less and less. For me this is almost an agreeable thought; it resembles the sensation of perfect rest after great exhaustion, or the feeling experienced by a poor bird of passage, whose wings have been shot away, and for

whom a soft, warm nest has been prepared, so that it may feel less sad and miserable.

Hermann, through his agreeable companionship, has made a pleasure of the journey that would otherwise have been a torment. He paid his court assiduously to my intellectual wife, and I was able to sit in peace and listen silently to their talk. He often reproached me, however, for allowing myself to be so depressed by the mere fact of being childless; such a wife, he maintained, constitutes in herself the very essence of happiness—one needs no other treasure. And I listened to him with a smile, like one who is in the act of ascending a glacier alone, when someone from below calls out to him the way he ought to go.

At first Nora was evidently afraid that I might confide in Hermann, and took care never to leave us at home together. Very soon, however, she became reassured, without our having exchanged a word on the subject. We never talk to one another of what lies deepest in our hearts; we never say anything to each other when we are alone that we should not care to be overheard in our drawing-room. And so this journey was very pleasant and enjoyable. Hermann

looked at me anxiously from time to time, to see if I were not becoming jealous, but he soon reassured himself and became once more his pleasant lovable self. Whoever had met us for the first time on this journey must have imagined us to be very happy, in spite of my wretched health, which I am obliged to drag about with me, and which has made of me the knight of the sad countenance, and has reduced me to the shadow of my former self.

HAXTRODEN, *July 24th.*

The escapades of my two brothers have forced us to come here for a short time, in order to bring the present wretched state of affairs into some sort of order. My mother was horrified when she saw me again, and overwhelmed Nora with reproaches for having allowed me to fall into such a condition.

“But his shoulders are quite bent, and his hair is grey!” cried my mother. “And look at his hollow eyes! But, Hans, in God’s name! And see how his cheeks are fallen away—and the way he walks! You used to tread with such an elastic step, and now you slink about like a lost soul!”

I overheard her saying to my brother: “If only

he would not smile ! I can't endure to see that smile, with those sad, despairing eyes ! He has become such a skeleton that his laugh is a ghastly grin. Ah, Edouard, it is fearful ! Must he die, my poor Hans ? Are there no doctors that can cure him ? ”

My poor mother ! It had never occurred to me that I had become so terribly changed, or I would never have allowed her to see me.

*July 27th.*—Oh, the delicious nights in my dear old studio ! Sometimes I play for hours at a time near the open window, and let the odorous night air blow upon me, and then I place Lavinia's portrait opposite me on the piano, and near it the photograph which her admirers had taken of her corpse. And then I play and play until I am overcome by a kind of stupor and fall asleep on the divan in the corner. The picture of her corpse is the image of her as she looked in Sorrento soon after that eventful night, when I used often to sit by her bedside for many hours at a time, watching the gentle heaving of her chest, and fearing that it would suddenly become quite cold and still, for her breath came and went as feebly as though she were just about to die.

“You seemed to me like my better angel, Jannino !”

At the thought of these words I feel as though I must begin again to rave and despair, to throw myself on the ground, and hold my head with both hands, for fear lest I may go mad. Anything rather than madness ! That would be the last stage of degradation. Whether the brain remain sound and healthy or no depends mainly on strength of will. I must not allow the darkness of night to enter my soul. No—rather let my spirit become purified and illuminated.

HAXTRODEN, *August 6th.*

Only a few more weary tedious days here, and then we wander forth again. In spite of the indescribable annoyances and vexations that I have to encounter, there is a delicious sensation of rest in being at home again at last.

The park and the wood are wondrously beautiful, and the trees still murmur under the breath of the soft wind, just as they used to murmur in the wild, stormy days of my youth, when they sang me to rest, those old, old trees, and whispered in my ear that I was a genius, and that some day I should witness the realisation of all my desires—that I only

needed to will in order to possess. Everything appeared to me so easy in those days. I could not in the least comprehend why people found it necessary to utter the word "impossible." Such a word had no existence for me.

Yes, the morning was brilliant, and the ship bravely bedecked, but the fierce power of the storm has been greater than my strength. I have suffered shipwreck, and now I lie in harbour like a stranded hulk, unserviceable, a sight to arouse compassion, and people have already almost forgotten that I ought to have become a great artist. In three days we go away from here, and I shall never return alive. The trees will moan and rustle over my grave, their leaves will fall in showers over my coffin. If only they might be the leaves of this autumn ! But it seems that one wish of my heart is not to be granted me.

My mother makes Nora's life here unbearable. It is her fault that I am obliged to remain altogether abroad, an exile from my home. I cannot exact such a sacrifice from Nora. She utters no word of complaint, but I can see that her very existence is intolerable.

She shall never endure another hour's suffering through any fault of mine. I will even learn from her to be always cheerful and in good spirits. That is not nearly so difficult as people imagine. It is but a habit to which one has to grow accustomed. It is just as easy to appear gay as to appear sad. It does not even require much strength of will, only perfect indifference—complete forgetfulness of one's own affairs as well as those of the outer world, and an absence of all desire and hope, just as though one were already in the grave. It is the custom to plant flowers even above graves so that these may look bright and gay.

I have made a firm resolution to maintain an appearance of cheerfulness and good spirits, and there now exists no one and nothing to cause me to fail in keeping this resolution.

My brother thought it advisable to enact a little melodrama to-day before me, because it has been thought advisable to place him under tutelage. I could have laughed aloud—the whole affair seemed to me so unutterably ludicrous. He overwhelmed me with a perfect flood of unreal passion. I listened to him as calmly and coolly as though he had been

some rushing, bubbling stream, which, in spite of the noise it makes, still remains without any warmth. While he talked I amused myself by sketching a lean clown in the act of giving a groschen to a tight-rope dancer even more lean than himself. His fleshings are torn, her shoes are much bepatched, and her petticoat in tatters. There is a good deal of bitterness and humour in the little sketch.

"Have you finished?" I said at last, in such a cool tone that Edouard looked at me horror-stricken. "You might have spared yourself all this," I said, "for things cannot be altered, and it would be easier to move a rock than me."

"But, Hans, what has come to you?"

"I find that I have been remarkably patient."

"About as patient as a milestone!" cried Edouard, beside himself.

His children are racing and romping about the house, and everyone is paying court to them as to the future owners of the place. My sister-in-law said to-day:—

"I must say, Nora, you have trained your husband well. Mine grows more and more unmanageable, but yours seems only to breathe through you. I used to

have no idea that he even loved you. But you are the most extraordinary couple. He is as gallant towards you as though he were your lover, and treats you like a queen. How have you managed to bring about such happy results?"

"I have studied his character and disposition, and have occupied myself with nothing else but him and his happiness."

"But must one, then, *study* such things?"

"I think so. Nothing in this world comes to one of its own accord."

They are all as shy with us as though we were riddles which they are unable to decipher. My calmness and icy composure, more especially, are so new to them that they are fairly puzzled. Why should I ever become excited or agitated any more about anything in this world? I had forgotten, though, Lavinia's couch in the monastery at Sorrento had forced from me once more burning, bitter tears. It stood in its old place.

PARIS, November 10th.

If one might mention the word heroism in speaking of such insignificant mortals, I should say that, in the

matter of mutual forbearance, Nora and I are very heroic. Nora looks almost gay and cheerful, and I exert myself to be no disgrace to her evening receptions. I often suffer from indescribable home-sickness, but Nora will not hear of going back to Haxtroden. She declares that she is unable to bear the recollections that crowd upon her there. She is, however, merely frightened of my people, for whom she has a peculiar aversion, and, since I have spoiled her life, I feel that I have no right to exact anything from her which must put an end to the pleasant though fictitious existence she is leading just at present.

We propose to remain here this winter. I spend a good deal of my time in the atelier, the only place where I am quite my own master, where I can lie down when my sufferings are too great for passive endurance without enquiring eyes resting on me. In the quiet and stillness I am able to work again. I have written and composed all sorts of poems and music, have begun to write novelettes and to jot down various thoughts and fancies, and have found a certain kind of rest and peace in doing this. The main stream of creative force has been interrupted and diverted into

another channel, but sometimes a quiet little rill steals through dykes and barriers, and bears away my pain. Sometimes I cease to feel at all, and sink into a dreamy condition of passive indifference.

HAXTRODEN, *September 12th, 18—.*

(*Seven years later.*)

The lamp burns more feebly, and I have once more turned my steps towards home, so that I may end my days here. My mother is living in a house set apart for widows of our family, and which I have had fitted up for her use, so that she may not make Nora's life a burden to her; more especially when I shall have passed away, and Nora will be mistress of Haxtroden. I have made arrangements for my brothers to live elsewhere. No one shall know how ill I am, for no one shall witness my illness. Nora is sufficient for me. She is always in the same good spirits, full of energy and vitality and of interest in life; she reads aloud to me for hours at a time while I lie on the divan in my atelier.

My God, how sweet it is to die! I no longer suffer—I only grow weaker and weaker. She is a most devoted and faithful companion, and has become quite

indispensable to me. The past is never mentioned by either of us; it is just as though we had never passed through the bitterness of death—as though we had never been crushed and bruised by sorrow and pain unspeakable. That I am paying forfeit with my life seems to me only right and just—I make no complaint of this. I only complain that I have not possessed the requisite force to rise above my sufferings, and to renew my being in renewing my creative efforts.

Some of my sad failures in accomplishing what I would willingly have accomplished I leave as a legacy to my friend Hermann. Possibly my want of success may be the means of bringing joy—perhaps also sorrow—into his life.

I have taken up the thread of my own existence at the wrong end, and become entangled in its meshes and intricacies till I am utterly exhausted.

Do not weep for me. It is very well with me—the struggle is at an end. The great sorrow of my entity seems to have faded away into some far, far distance. Peace and resignation are here, here in the very room where I used to feel my spirit wildly raging within me, until I was on the verge of madness.

My eyes grow heavy, my hand feeble, for I am passing away—passing, without any pain or regret, into a rest eternal—a rest that is full of calm and holy peace.





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